

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE

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R. J. FLETCHER.

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FEBRUARY 1930.

POLYCHROMATA.

BY J. LESLIE MITCHELL.

VIII. EAST IS WEST.

I.

SEE to the dip and play of them above Heliopolis! They are like birds, despite the good Mogara. . . . The fighting machines, I think.

Incongruous over Cairo—those aeroplanes? They outrage the atmosphere Eastern? But why? Was not Daedalus of the East—of Crete and the Crete prehellenic at that? Was it into La Manche so-admired that the first of the aeronaut martyrs fell? . . . Yours the geography unreliable, my friend. The Icarian Sea lies not in Western Europe!

East is East and West is West—it is the heresy pitiful, the concept pre-Copernician. Those the fighting-birds of steel: they were made in your England—and are numbered with symbols evolved in the East two thousand years ago; your aeronauts—they bear on their tunics the winged crests of ancient Egypt!

For East is West and West is East; they merge and flow and are the compass-points of a dream. And the little jingo men who walk the world, lifting here the banner Nordic and there the flag Mongolian—in the white hands that raise the banner is the blood of cannibals pre-Aryan, the banner itself is a-flutter with symbols obscene first painted in the jungle-towns of Cambodia; the little Jap is a White, a mongrel Ainu, and salutes on his flag the design first graved on the ancient stones of Cuzco! . . .

Then of race or culture-barriers I would recognise none? God mine, I can recognise nothing else! Like Simon Mogara, like all of us, my life is fenced about with tribe-taboos, my ears deafened with the whining rhymes of cultures troglodyte! Like Simon—

II.

But I will tell you of Mogara the while we sit and watch the aeroplanes. And the tourists haughty who pass us by this dusty

Abbassieh roadway will think us tramps or the Europeans gone native!

Mogara. It is almost four years ago since I first met him, the one evening in January. I had gone to live in Heliopolis that I might be near my clients of the hotels, and that day had spent the many and wearying hours indoors, in the Cairo Museum, explaining to a party indifferent and irreverent the unauthentic history of King Oonas. Returned at sunset, I set out to walk across the sands towards Helmieh, so that I might meet the evening wind.

I remember that evening very well. There was a thin ghost-play of lightning on the horizon and presently a little wind stirring to whorling puffs the tops of the sand-hillocks. I had stopped to light the pipe in a miniature nullah and from that climbed out, and so came abruptly on Mogara, the silhouette.

'Good-evening,' I said in the uncertainty.

He also spoke in the accent un-English. 'Good-evening.' He wheeled slowly on his heels till almost he faced me. Then: 'Would you mind stepping aside—or falling flat? The wind's just coming behind you and I'm going to launch her.'

I stepped aside in the hurriedness and some bewilderment. A little film of mist-powder came drifting over the tundra. Mogara raised his arms and flung a glittering bird into the air.

For a moment it swayed perilously, as if about to fall. Then came a little click and sputter, and with the flapping of great wings the fowl amazing soared upwards. So, for perhaps the hundred yards, it soared, in the long curve towards Cairo. Then, unaccountably—for the wings beat quickly as ever—it began to fall, but backwards, and towards us, like a boomerang. Mogara ran forward and I followed him. The bird slipped down into his arms the moment I came to his side.

'This bird,' I said, 'it is—'

He turned on me the face deep-scowling in thought, and with the little start I realised that he was no European. It was a face of the heavy and even bronze, with thin nose, straight brows and lips, and with the startling disfigurement of two long-healed scars stamped darkly from right eye to ear. For the little we looked at each other, and then he smiled slowly.

'It is, God willing, an ornithopter.'

III.

I grew to know him well and made the occasional visits to his hut in Zeitoun. It was little more than the hut, being an American bungalow set in a little garden. The one half of it he used as workshop and study, the other he slept in and therein cooked the much of eggs and rice, being inexpert in the preparation of foods more ambitious.

'Flying? There has been no flying yet. Aeroplanes are not flying-machines. They're structures of cambered planes juggling with artificially-created currents of air. The aeroplane is a mistake—no true forerunner of the flying-machine. Like the pterodactyl, it's only a tentative air-experiment, destined to die childless. . . .'

'And this,' I would say, pointing to the bird-winged model, with its little petrol engine and gleam of aluminium, boat-shaped body, 'this the ornithopter—presently it will fly?'

He would scowl and laugh at that, then jump to his feet and stride to the window and watch a flight of desert-making birds. 'Damn it, colonel, it flies already. You've seen it. Only—' he would peer upwards unfriendly at the dots that were birds—'it doesn't keep flying. There's something—'

There was something, some law of the flight insoluble, which brought his models to ground after every first hundred yards or so, albeit the wings still beat. Model after model he had tried out. In itself the tremendous achievement, he had solved the initial difficulty of the ornithopter—the building of wings strong, yet flexible, capable of the under-sweep and the poising blow, capable of lifting the machine into air. But in the air it refused to stay.

He would expound these things to me, the child in matters aeronautic, with the great logic and clarity, and in the swing of exposition would a strange thing occur. His voice would lose its mechanic staccato and acquire an alien lilt and rhythm. Once, in the midst of such converse, he pulled himself up and laughed.

'Did you notice that—the half-caste sing-song? Funny. And quite ineradicable.'

He had the genuine, impersonal amusement in these traits betrayed by his own personality. But it was the same half-sardonic, half-impatient amusement which personalities always stirred in him. He had none of the half-breed's resentments or enthusiastic championings—'perhaps because I'm a quarter-breed. The

snarling of the bleached and the coloured go over my head. People don't count. Aeronautics is my job.'

He was of the lesser breeds intermingled enough. His grandfather, a Goanese half-caste, had settled down in Jaffa after wanderings dim and inexplicable. There, as the orange-merchant, he had flourished, acquired a Cretan wife, and, in the course of time and nature, a son. This son, exported to France for education, married, and returned to Jaffa after the several years with a Parisian lady who took life as a jest and the circles orange-growing by storm. . . . Such Mogara family-history and social advancement till the appearance of the little Simon.

His appearance seemed to his father the event retrogressive. The Parisian lady, true to character, found him the oddity amusing. They had expected the child who would show no trace of the Goanese grandfather. Instead, they found themselves parents to an atavistic little infant who might have been a Hindu undiluted. As soon as he was old enough his father, in the some disgust, exiled him to school and university in Lyons, where colour is little bar and they of the skins dark-pigmented accounted amongst God's creatures.

He was twenty-nine years of age that evening I encountered him on the Helmieh sands. In that interval from the Jaffa days he had become the French citizen, had during the War served in a French air regiment and acquired the high Legion decoration, had succeeded to and sold the business orange-exporting on the death of his father and mother, had travelled to America—

Of those the American days I heard only in disjointed, sardonic outline. Early after the War, dissatisfied with aeroplanes, he had set about experimenting with helicopter-models, and, abandoning that second stage, with flexible gliders and winged kites. He might have remained in France to this day but for the lack of readily-procurable apparatus in that country immediately after its exhausting triumph. The experimenter's needs drove him to America to work and study.

There he found himself, to his own amusement, treated as servant and inferior. Even from other experimenters and aeronauts was the occasional jibe at the 'nigger birdman.' Settled in a new town built on the aircraft trade, he went out one night and found the streets in the excitement and turmoil. The usual story had spread of the negro and white woman. Presently was the negro, also as usual, dragged out of jail by the crowd and lynched. Ensued a kind of anti-colour pogrom. . . .

Mogara brought out of that turmoil the scarred face and a week in hospital. A citizen of France, apologies were made through stiff consular representations and an indemnity offered. . . . I can see the light of amusement flicker on that brooding brown face as he lay in hospital and heard of the indemnity.

For he was as completely indifferent to revenge as to reconciliation. Mankind I think he envisaged largely as the straying packs of parti-coloured puppies, baying unaccountably at the moon and indulging in the dog-squabbles equally unaccountable. Amidst all this canine pride and uproar his the 'job' to find a corner obscure and pacific where he could build an ornithopter that flew. . . .

I remember making the interjection.

'But for whom, then, do you work—for whom add to the sum of knowledge? If such is humanity, why seek to build this flying machine?'

'For my own private pride, I suppose. . . . To visit the moon and see what all the howling's about.' He shrugged. 'How should I know? . . . Anyhow, I decided against returning even to France, and came to Egypt instead, where there are other brown men in charge. Being the shade they are I calculated they'd probably neither hinder nor mutilate me, nor look askance at my feet.'

'Your feet?'

He grinned, the scars creasing in dark serrations on his cheek. 'Yes. You see, I have the half-caste's passion for yellow boots.'

So, with such jest indifferent, to switch to other matters. I remember he told me these things at his garden-entrance on the Zeitoun road one evening, the while we smoked a parting pipe. When he had ceased speaking there was the little clatter and cloud of white dust far up the road towards Cairo, and I watched it idly.

They were the man and girl on horseback, and as they cantered near I drew a breath of admiration. The man young, of the thirty-forties, with the soldier's shoulders, the cold, narrow face with clean-cut features, the cold stare of blue eyes. But the girl—like her companion of the English, like him result of that fineness of breeding and the much nursery-scrubbing that has made the English aristocrat. And the something—as so often in the feminine of that type, and so seldom in the masculine—it had brought to flower in her: the beauty indefinable as the grace of a lily. Very young, bare-headed with the shock of the tidily-untidy hair, slim

and upright and with easy hands she rode, head a little thrown back. As she went by her eyes passed over us in the momentary scrutiny, distant, indifferent, impersonal—and bored.

So they passed into the evening, and I, who love types and so seldom find them, had the sting of gratification. These the English, the Aryans ultra-bred, dominant, blood-proud, apart. How apart from all the lesser breeds, they of the pigmentation, 'without the Law'!

I glanced at Mogara in the little shame for my own thoughts. And then I saw that he had scarcely noted the passing of the riders. He was staring up into the sky at the inevitable flight of sunset-winged birds.

IV.

All next day he worked on a new modification of the keel of his model, and about five of the afternoon went out across the ranges beyond Helmieh to test it anew. For a little, near the original mound where I had found him, perhaps, he stood awaiting the coming of the wind. Deep in thought and the calculation of mathematical minutiae he saw the sand-heaps at length begin to puff, and, setting a dial, launched the bird-machine into the air. It beat upwards with stiffer motion than formerly. A clatter of stones behind him drew his scowling attention. He glanced over his shoulder.

Not a dozen feet away a bare-headed girl sat on horseback, her eyes fixed on the flight of the ornithopter. So only for the moment he noted, then his attention also went back to the model. It flew perhaps two yards further than usual, then commenced its usual boomerang descent.

He swore, ran forward and caught it, and heard behind him the amazed intake of breath. The girl had dismounted, and as he turned with the bird-machine in his arms her eyes were very bright with excitement.

'Oh . . . sorry if I'm spying. But that was wonderful!'

'It was rotten,' he said, neither graciously nor ungraciously, but with complete indifference to either her apologies or applause. Undiscouraged, she came nearer, her horse following with down-bent, snuffling head.

'But why? It's an ornithopter, and it flew. Real flying, not just aeroplane gliding. . . . And my brother argues we'll never have ornithopters—never anything more than a lop-sided helicopter

or so. 'Wish he could have seen that! It wasn't a secret test, was it?'

He had been aware of a slight surprise at meeting someone who knew the difference between an ornithopter and a helicopter. Now, still with the absent-minded scowl, but half-heeding her presence, he answered the question.

'No. Why should it be?'

'I thought all experimenters did these things secretly and then pestered Governments.' This with the flippancy, but then a return to excitement. 'I say! Most thrilling thing I've seen in this boring country—most thrilling thing I've ever seen, I think. . . . Do you know the old Frost ornithopter in the London Science? Is yours on the same principle?'

'If you've seen the Frost——' He was launched the more successfully than ever had been his model. He set the bird-machine on the ground, demonstrating its build and principal departures from the Frost model. He brought out the pencil and scrap of paper and dashed off lines of the calculations dizzying and algebraic.

The girl remained undizzied. Still holding the bridle she knelt down in the interest, and the horse extended over her shoulder the inquisitive head. . . . They must have made the amusing grouping there on the sands.

She had flown many times in aeroplanes, had the English Aero Club's pilot certificate, had, like himself, an obsession that the aeroplane was traitor to aviation and that Romance which had lured men to the conquest of the skies since the days of Cretan Daedalus.

'It wasn't for the sake of a world of super-engined kites that Icarus and Egremont and Lilenthal died. But real flying. . . . And you won't sell your model to any Government, or make it a war machine?'

'Good Lord, no.'

'Good man!'

He saw a hand stretched out towards him, and stared at it. His thoughts came hurtling down from rarefied heights like an aeroplane disabled. He found himself kneeling side by side not with a pleasant voice and a disembodied enthusiasm, but an English girl. . . .

That stare and silence of his drew her eyes. So, for a little, they looked at each other in the mutual wonder: the girl, white

and gold, radiant and aloof even in excitement; Mogara, lithe and slight, with the slightness un-European, the dark, scarred face, the scowl of thin-pencilled brows. . . . He saw the girl's eyes widen, and at that, with a sardonic little laugh, he was on his feet.

'Yes, I'm a native. But you're quite safe.'

And then, dimly, indifferently, he realised that he had made a mistake. The girl's eyes looked through him as she too rose to her feet.

He had ceased to exist.

V.

At nine o'clock that evening, passing down the Sharia Kamil, my eyes fell on the small car unmistakable. It was the yellow runabout, the property of my friend the Dr. Adrian, and it stood in front of a little open-air café with many tables. At one of those tables, deep in the usual self-game with dominoes, sat Adrian himself.

This is to him relief and narcotic in one, this game played with the great seriousness. To me recurred the wonder whimsical: Is he ever victor—and over whom? . . . He looked up and saw me and swept aside the pieces.

'Hello, colonel. Haven't seen you for ages. Sit down and gossip. How's Heliopolis?'

'It is the place dry,' I said, and at that he ordered me the wine. Then:

'Seen anything of the Melforts there? Cousins of mine—air-people, newly come from Malta?'

'I did not know you possessed the cousins,' I said. He grinned and yawned, having passed the toilsome day.

'Knowledge that was never kept from me, unfortunately. I was forced to punch the aristocratic Melfort nose quite early in my career.' He was reminiscent. 'And was getting as good as I gave till Joyce, in a pinafore and a white wrath, separated us with a shower of stones and pelted us impartially. . . . Murderous little pacifist.'

He expounded the brief and irreverent family history the while I drank the wine. These Melforts were the remote cousins only: the grandmother of Adrian had been sister of the grandfather of Reginald and Joyce Melfort.

'But we come from the same county town, you see, and there's

been a kind of family friendship—patronising on both sides—kept going for three generations. The Adrians have been the medical and improverished branch; they've assisted new Melforts into the world and signed their certificates of departure for the next during the last seventy years or so. Know more of Melfort history than the Melforts themselves, who've only passed on the high lights to their descendants.' He chuckled as at some secret jest. 'Grandfather Melfort went out to Jamaica, raised rum and a great deal of money, and returned to perpetuate a military and gentlemanly stock. Put his son into the army, and grandson Reginald followed in his father's footsteps. . . . It was he whose nose I punched.

'Not a bad chap really, I suppose. Only—he never had a chance. Born in India and reared on the usual pap. A Nordic snub-man with highly-scrubbed virtues and a disposition to pronounce what as hwaw. Transferred to the Air Force during the War and is a squadron leader or something now. Has taken the latest wonder of science and made of it a means for forming fours in the air and inspecting engines to see if they're properly shaved. . . . That kind.'

He broke off, as in conversation he so often did, to refute his own exaggerations. 'No. That's damned unfair. A very good airman, I believe. Straight as a die, efficient, proud of the Service, an excellent example of the breeding of an aristocrat in three generations. . . . Let's be unfair. Impartiality's too much of a strain. He has less imagination than a wombat, and the colour, caste and class prejudices of a tabu-ridden Brahmin. In his secret soul he believes the Anglo-Saxon saheb evolved from a special type of ape which always cleaned its teeth in the morning and even in the early Miocene wore badges of rank on its fur. . . . I've been invited to dinner in ten days' time, and if Reginald and I don't quarrel and bandy authorities and sneers, it'll be the first occasion since the nose-punching episode. Joyce had better stand by with an armful of stones.'

'She is the sister?'

'Occasionally. When she remembers. Keeps house nominally for Reginald: keeps him on tenterhooks actually. Modern and un-modern. A romantic's idealisation of English womanhood in appearance—she'd delight your eyes, Saloney—and in mind a quattrocento adventurer, mystic and mountain-storming. Flies aeroplanes and innumerable outrageous opinions, waxes hot over all kinds of unexpected things and cold over everything which her

appearance warrants. . . . By the seven goats of Egypt—Hi!’

He leapt from his chair with the beaming face and the startling shout, and seized the arm of a passer-by—the man bareheaded, absorbed, chest-clasping the large and ungainly parcel. Thus assaulted, the stranger dropped the parcel—which split, grocery-disgorging—and turned scowlingly upon Adrian. Almost immediately vanished the scowl.

‘God, the doctor of Chaumont!’

‘Air-ambulance 30Q!’

They fell to the hand-shaking, the enquiries innumerable, the laughter of men who had shared the war-episode unforgettable. Adrian turned to make the introduction, but I forestalled him.

‘I am acquainted,’ I said, ‘with M. Mogara.’

VI.

For four days after his meeting with the unknown girl on the sands, and with the little Adrian and myself in the Sharia Kamil, Mogara kept to his workshop, fitting the new keel to his ornithopter. On the fourth evening he tramped out beyond Helmieh again to put his modification to test. As usual, he walked in the study brown, and so almost dashed his head against horse and rider—both of which had been regarding his approach for over a mile.

It was the girl, and she surveyed him insolently. ‘What is your name, Mr.—Native?’

He was in a good humour, expecting better results from his model. He twinkled at her sardonically. ‘Mogara—memsaheb. . . . And my grandfather was a Goanese.’

She flushed angrily. ‘He may have been a Chinese albino for all I care. You are very much concerned with your family history, M. Mogara. Hasn’t it ever struck you that it may be boring to others? Or your rôle of the dark and dangerous male the other evening—wasn’t it rather cowardly?’

He was sardonically undisturbed. ‘No doubt I’m both a bore and a coward. Meantime my job’s not psycho-analysis but amateur aeronautics.’

‘Of course it is! And since the tests aren’t secret why mayn’t I come and watch them? Why have you kept away from the trial-ground these last three evenings? Can’t you see that I want to learn, that it’s your ornithopter I’m interested in, not you, you—’

He stared at her. It was the one appeal which could have touched him. On his face, dark and scarred, she saw a scowling wonder. A slow smile followed. Then :

“Blithering ass” are the words you want. . . . I’m sorry.’ He held out a tentative hand. ‘If——’

Her fingers touched his. They regarded each other gravely for a moment, laughed together ; then Joyce Melfort dismounted, sat down, clasped her hands about her knees, and watched. . . .

You must figure her so, evening after evening. For the meetings went on. Almost every evening she rode across the sands to find Mogara, with some new modification imposed upon his model, waiting for the sunset wind.

And presently, in between times of the test-flying and the calculations abstruse, they would find themselves deep in talk—talk that ranged away from aeronautics and back to it and away again. She found his mind the encyclopædia of sheer fact, the mind of the scientist, a little warped, almost passionless but for that the desire and pursuit of knowledge ; hers was to him revelation of how knowledge may be transmuted to idealism and hope and purpose. . . .

Except a sardonic scepticism for all enthusiasms nationalist and religious he had the no-philosophy of life. She made him see all human existence in the terms of high Adventure—the Adventure scarce begun, the struggle from the slime to the stars. *Per ardua ad astra*. Every scrap of new knowledge was equipment for that Adventure ; every man who fought the beast in himself and the anti-christ many-guised, who kept the honest ledgers and the open mind, who knew the ache of wonder and a desire beyond fulfilment—he fought in the spear-head of the Adventure. . . .

And Mogara, his model half-forgotten, would brood and listen till he too glimpsed faith and belief in that Republic in the skies which lies beyond our shadowed uncertainties, which sometimes seems but a generation away.

Sometimes, as they talked, they would lift their heads and see the wheel and glitter of the Squadron Leader Melfort’s aeroplanes practising dusk landings at Heliopolis.

VII.

‘A nigger chappie with a bee in his bonnet and one of those helicopter-thingummys. He’s been at it for months, they say,

practising out on the sands beyond Helmieh. Saw him myself last night when I went up to do a spot of night-flying.'

Joyce Melfort came riding against the sunset of the tenth day since her first encounter with Mogara. Fragments from the chatter at her brother's table the previous evening rode with her, like buzzing gnats. . . . She had been coldly angry, then wondering and amused. Now, with an amazement, she found herself angry again.

From far across the sands Mogara waved to her, absent-mindedly. As she rode towards him the buzzing of an aeroplane engine grew loud overhead. She glanced upwards, saw one of the machines of her brother's squadron dip towards her and Mogara as though they were the bombing target, and then rise and wheel back towards Heliopolis.

'Now that that anachronism's gone——'

She reined in, dismounted, and stood watching in silence. Mogara clicked out the wings of the much-tried model, set revolving the little dial and pointer in its heart, and then launched the contrivance into the air.

He did not stop to watch its progress, but turned round towards her with the now not-infrequent smile. "'Hope springs eternal——"' he patted the neck of her nuzzling mount. '—If you're not bored with the performance by now, I think your horse must be. . . . Eh?'

She had caught his arm in the painful grip. 'Quick! Look!'

Mogara wheeled round and stared skywards, stared at a flapping-winged model which neither failed nor descended, which rose and rose with steady purr of miniature engine and then began to wheel overhead in great circles. . . .

Its inventor gulped, swore inadequately, and then found Joyce Melfort's hands gripping his, shaking them up and down.

'Why, you've won, you've won!' She glanced up for reassurance and then executed a little dance. 'My dear man, can't you realise it? Waken up! Aren't you glad? . . .'

Her voice died away. There came in her eyes the terror and expectation. Unaccountably in his arms, she saw his scarred face terrifyingly close. So, the moment she would remember forever, and then, kissed by him, there awoke in her something like a dream forgotten. . . . That—then they were apart, and she had slashed him across the face with her riding-whip.

He staggered a little under her blow, and then, in a queer

silence, not looking at her, brought out a handkerchief, and dabbed at the blood-priming weal which flushed angrily on his unscarred cheek. He lowered the scrap of linen, looking at it in a kind of wonder, and at that Joyce Melfort's stricken remorse found voice.

'Oh, I'm sorry. . . . I was a beast. But you shouldn't——'

He smiled at her, without a hint of mockery, with dull eyes. He was very quiet—dazedly quiet.

'I know I shouldn't. That was the only possible reply.' He turned away uncertainly, fumbling with the handkerchief. 'And now you'd better go.'

He expected to hear the sound of her footsteps going towards the horse. Instead, there was complete silence. He glanced round again. She stood where he had kissed her, in her eyes an angry flame of courage and resolution. She began to speak.

'Listen : I'm sorry—because I hit you. Not because you kissed me. Why shouldn't you ?' Her voice quivered a little, but her eyes were very unwavering. 'I—I wanted you to.'

They stared at each other. Overhead, absurdly, and in the circles drawing gradually earthwards, wheeled the unheeded ornithopter model. Mogara shook his head. . . .

She found herself listening to an impossible renunciation from an impossible lover, the while the darkness came flowing across the sands.

' . . . You're splendid to have said that. But to-morrow—and the next day—it'll sound impossible. To you it sounds half-impossible even now. . . . English—and I'm a mongrel. Your people——' He seemed to forget what he had intended to say. His voice trailed off. He shrugged, and held out his hand, and was oddly shy, and stammered for the first time since she had known him.

'Thanks for you—for it.' Her limp fingers touched his. They smiled at each other strainedly. 'This isn't anything, you know. We aren't anything. And there's still your Adventure. For both of us. Always there's the Adventure . . .'

She found herself mounted and riding towards Heliopolis. A hundred yards away she looked back and saw Mogara snatch a magic bird out of the darkness, like a boy playing with a dream.

VIII.

And less than a dream was it presently to seem to him. In the Zeitoun hut he sat and stared at the ornithopter model. Successful. He had won. Successful.

He went to a mirror and saw the ghostly reflection of his own face, scarred on both cheeks. . . . So it had actually happened.

He began, mechanically, to prepare a meal. What was it he had said? The Adventure: still the Adventure. . . . Aeronautics not enough now. Something to follow and believe in. *She* believed in it. . . .

He heard the galloping horse stop at his garden-gate; heard hasting footsteps come up to the open door of the hut. For a moment a figure was dim against the night-dimness, and then Joyce Melfort was in the room.

They stood facing each other. He saw her breast rise and fall, breathing as might one who had run a race.

'M. Mogara—did you or did you not kiss me out there?'

He nodded whitely. Thereat she gave a sigh, and suddenly collapsed, limply, happily, into a chair.

'Then that's all right. Because you'll have to marry me now, in spite of my deplorable ancestors. Where can I throw my hat?' She jumped up in expostulation. 'My dear, whoever told you that was the way to cook a sausage?'

She knelt over the sputtering oil-stove, and, so kneeling, wheeled round and laughed up at him. 'Poor brother Reginald! . . . ' She stopped to make mirthful appraisal of her finger-nails. She was incoherently light-hearted. 'Knew as soon as I got home that he knew. That was *his* machine that came bombing us this afternoon. He'd heard about us—came down to spy, my dear. . . . Was waiting for me, he and Adrian—they'd been quarrelling—and oh! what does it matter what he said? I felt too sick to notice much till Adrian broke in with a kind of shout. "Who? *Simon Mogara*?" Stared from one to other of us and then laughed and laughed, and then grew white and furious. "*Nigger*? Why, damn your impudence——!" and it all came out, and so did I, and made for the stables, leaving Reggie like a ghost and Adrian shouting wishes to you. . . . What an evening! Who'd have guessed it? Who ever? And now——'

His queer, frozen silence made her glance up. In a moment she was beside him. 'Why, why—Simon! . . . '

IX.

It was some time before either of them stirred from that position wherein she had told her eager secret amazing. Smell of burning

sausage roused Joyce. She broke away and danced to the oil-stove, and Mogara, released from necessity to hold her in his arms, sank down into the chair she had vacated and stared at his yellow boots as though they were the footwear unbelievable. . . .

An hour later, on parting under the stars at the garden-gate, he heard her gay answer to his question come out of the dimness: 'Why, soon as ever, dear!' Dimly from her saddle she bent towards him to give him the ghostly kiss. Then had the whimsical thought and laughed a grave little laugh.

'But our children—whatever'll they be citizens of?'

Her hand, warm and assured, in his, he stood and looked up at her, and beyond her at the stars, at the years he saw with their difficulties and disillusionments and perhaps the bitter shames for her to face. But in his voice she heard only the tenderness as he answered with the jest that was more than jest, that would surely cry its promise through all their lives.

'Why—the Republic in the skies!'

X.

For East is West and West is East and the little fascistic German blesses as the Aryan symbol exclusive the swastika they worshipped in the Temples of Chichen-Stza. . . . Eh? You see, the good Adrian, until provoked beyond endurance, had held it as a dark and mirthful secret that the Melfort grandmother, wealth-bringing, had been a 'white mulatto' of Jamaica.

REMINISCENCES OF OSCAR WILDE.

BY PROFESSOR A. H. COOPER-PRICHARD, A.M., LITT.B.

I HAVE repeatedly noticed that every once in a while something comes up in the Press about Oscar Wilde, and I have on every such occasion observed that such reminiscences are always eagerly read, even by those who never read Wilde's own works and who do not approve of his—shall we call them *morals*?

A certain *few* of the people who write these reminiscences knew him really well; and, being themselves grown up at the time, doubtless much better than myself; but most of these writers of reminiscences of Wilde, I have particularly remarked, were only acquainted with him more or less *superficially*, and many of them practically not at all beyond a mere passing introduction; yet *even they* are listened to, or rather read; and with interest, too.

This has given me courage to make my own little contribution to the memory of that fascinating personage; for, though Wilde was not exactly a *great* man of Letters, he had his portion of that individual charm which we associate more particularly with writers, perhaps, than with any other intellectual lights; writers such as Walton, Addison, Swift, Lamb, Stevenson and some few others. My own memories of him come somewhere half-way between these two kinds of reminiscence recorders here referred to; but, even so, they may not be altogether without their worth in their own particular way; and, certainly, I saw Wilde from an angle wholly different from that of any of theirs, owing to the entirely different train of circumstances which drew me within his sphere, circumstances by no means influenced by any intention of will on either side but which were wholly inevitable in themselves; and it is just from this very condition of things that this angle from which I approached him differed so widely from any other I have yet observed in those other reminiscences; for, in the first place, it was never the least necessary for him to pose before *me*, at least in *my own special* direction; while I, not consciously realising, in the beginning at least, that I was supposed to be in the presence of a genius, was never forced out of my natural self so as to some-

what level the distance between our mental planes. In other words, I knew him simply and naturally as a visitor in my own grandmother's house, and he knew me, at least at first, merely as the schoolboy nephew of my aunts, the latter of whom more or less ran after him as a 'lion.'

On the other hand, the acquaintanceship was intimate and of long standing, and it deepened into a very real friendship. On my part I cannot recollect a time before I was accustomed to see 'the tall beautiful young Irish giant,' 'the modern Antinous,' as he was often called; and 'with the woman's face,' as my mother, who did not like him (preferring for her part the soldierly type of man), used to add to this description. His long beautiful hair and his æsthetic way of dressing always impressed me, who, even as a small boy, abhorred the modern costume as it was then and as it now is.

It follows that I cannot, like other reminiscence writers, record '*my first meeting* with Oscar Wilde'; but I perfectly recollect the first time when he made a more than usually distinct impression upon myself; and it may be a consolation to some type of readers that I can recall *the date* when this happened, or very nearly so, for it was when Irving produced '*Faust*' at the Lyceum, about 1887 or 1888 as I think, since it is due to that particular circumstance that I remember it.

I went to see that historic production and came away so impressed with it that for quite a while I could think of nothing else, apparently. Besides nourishing an amorous passion for Ellen Terry—even then not much younger than my own unusually-young grandmother—as Margaret; my admiration for Mephistopheles was so great that I broke forth into premature verse in the form of a dreadful long 'poem,' bearing the burlesquely-odic title '*Mephistopheles's Address to the Owls.*'

I worked on it for several days in succession; and the one on which I finished it and, in the oblivious pride of authorship, read it to my aunts, Oscar Wilde in his informal way dropped in to tea. To enjoy further fun at my expense, I suppose, my aunts told Mr. Wilde what I had done; but I imagine they thought they had gone rather too far when he insisted on my reading the whole of it aloud in the drawing-room. When I had done so, he said it reminded him of Byron and, just as my heart began to flutter with hopeful pride, for Byron, after Shakespeare, was my great idol then, he, unfortunately, added '*at his worst.*' '*How-*

ever,' he said very kindly to me, 'it has been read so well that we must forgive you *its composition*.'

Just at that moment who should enter the room but Irving himself and Ellen Terry, both family friends.

'Irving,' said Wilde, 'I have just stumbled across a eulogy on your acting which you yourself would hardly suspect!'

Irving smiled that wan, mirthless, yet kindly, though rather patronising, smile of his and, with Miss Terry, came over to where we were. Then Wilde in his inimitable way, which I regret that I cannot now recall in his own words, told them of the 'ode' as he called it, adding, however, there was nothing odious about it except the owls; and, he further added, these lines which occurred in it:

'Screech, Owls, screech
That to my ears it may reach!'

and he gravely asked Irving if they were in the version of 'Faust' which *he* used. Years afterwards I saw that translation, and then I realised the double irony in Wilde's query, and that I alone was not the only butt of it.

Next, to the horror of my aunts, Wilde insisted that I should repeat the reading of the verses 'for the benefit of Mr. Irving and Miss Terry'; and, when one of my aunts remarked that it would be doubly boring for Wilde to hear them *again*, he replied:

'Oh, why not? It will not be *the first time* I have been the victim of "*a poet*"!'

When I had duly complied with this request, backed up as it was in a lively manner by Miss Terry and in a polite, if rather melancholy and formal, way by the great tragedian, the kind, impulsive actress turned to my aunts and said:

'Take care of this boy, or you'll find him wanting to go on the Stage!'

Years afterwards I related that incident amid grease paint and powder to my fellow-players in more than one theatrical dressing-room on the professional Stage; but this is neither here nor there, and its intrusion is only pardonable in the connection of the scene with Oscar Wilde.

As I grew older I saw more of Wilde, and not only in my own grandmother's drawing-room, where I also again often met him, his mother and my grandmother having been bosom friends from

girlhood, when they had been schoolmates in the same young ladies' seminary. I likewise went to his remarkable receptions where he lodged and where the most remarkable coloured effects of lighting were used to give an æsthetic effect, supposed to have an influence on the thought and conversation of the people present ; and, except for the drawback—if so it really were—that one was not always sure who the person one was speaking to was, owing to its dimness, otherwise it must have been very soothing to tired eyes and tired nerves. Often in after years in the glare of Transatlantic drawing-rooms I have regretfully recalled that æsthetic ambient.

On these occasions Wilde was always keyed up to his highest pitch of brilliancy, hence I regret the more that I find it extremely difficult to recall the bright particular things he gave utterance to, and which all London repeated the next day ; for here was the disadvantage in the angle from which I myself knew him, to me the interest in him was always more that of the family friend, accentuated by his personal kindness and sympathy in my own intellectual tastes and aspirations, at the time in irritating conflict with the family intentions in regard to the career which they deemed I ought in duty bound to follow. Nevertheless, I do recollect some few of the things which he said to me personally, mostly on the occasions of my dropping in upon him unexpectedly during the daytime when discouraged by non-success, and particularly by either the indifference or hostility of those who, I thought, from the very nature of things ought to have sympathised with me.

In this way, too, we had many cosy talks together on Literature, more particularly from the writer's point of view. Above everything else I recollect his always insisting on *style* as the thing most essential in writing. 'Literature has no monopoly on *thought*,' I recall his saying on one of those occasions ; 'but,' he added, 'the way of *expressing* it in written words is her peculiar task. Any ass can write down drivel who can hold a pen between his paws, but even drivel may be written in a way that is artistic.'

I once referred to his tolerance of my having *twice* read to him my boyish doggerel about Mephistopheles and the owls, him who was usually so impatient of stupidity and being bored. 'It was the *sincerity* of the thing which appealed to me,' he said ; and added, 'the sincerity of a well-brought-up Public Schoolboy admiring *Mephistopheles* ; while, for the *expression*, it was such a

deliciously unconscious case of one's uncontrolled way of thinking being coloured with one own individual point of view.'

On another occasion he said: 'Style is the *colour* of writing.' And: 'There are only two rules in writing, to have something to say, and to say it; or, if you prefer its being put in a more *complicated* way, to have a story to tell, and to tell your story.' Again: 'A literary composition is a bundle of ideas tied together and with the edges trimmed off.'

One day, coming to our house and hearing that I was upstairs writing lists of historical dates, he ran up to my room to see me; and, when I had explained to him what these dates, which everybody else seemed to find so dull, meant to *me*, in order to give me a clear perspective of the Past, he observed, 'Besides, it is infinitely more difficult to write even a catalogue *well* than a novel *badly*.' I will not pretend to say if he had a covert irony in saying this, provoked by the fact that one of my aunts had just published her first novel, since a great many very fashionable people much admired the book, though, for that matter, I knew he held what the public admired to be '*necessarily* bad,' particularly what London 'Society' with a capital 'S' admired.

Altogether I got many helpful hints about composition from him which since have 'done me yeoman service.' As many people have viewed Wilde, it might seem strange to them that he was always insisting to me on 'Never write a line you yourself don't believe in!' but it is just there that the wide difference is between the Oscar Wilde I myself knew and the Oscar Wilde as he has so often been held up to the public. It is the latter view which I think, under the circumstances, I may be pardoned for believing to be an entirely wrong one. I might express it in this way: he always *seemed* insincere, *particularly when he was the most sincere*, instances of which I shall presently record as I recall them after this lapse of time. Nor can I blame those who so mistook him, since my own mother was never the least convinced of his sincerity. She always said to me warningly, 'He loves to make fools of other people, but he himself has too much common sense to believe in what he says.' There was a foundation, too, in this theory, for—strange as it may appear to those who knew him less intimately—real hard common sense was the true basis in Oscar Wilde's character. But where my mother and those who knew him the more intimately held this view, that is to say all of them except perhaps about half a dozen—among these last including his own

mother—my grandmother had the same view as *my* mother's, that he was a remarkably clever *poseur* and altogether insincere—they were entirely out in supposing *his* view of things was necessarily the wrong and the public's the right one. He was in fact a living paradox, and only paradoxes are true, as it will presently be shown both he and myself deeply and wholly sincerely believed to be the case, and as *I* still believe; 'for,' as he himself often said to me, 'how *could* "the fool-head multitude" ever have the *right* idea; or, if they happened to stumble across it, would they not instantly convert it into some absurdity?'

'What is Life else but a paradox?' I can recall his asking me on more than one occasion, as we sipped our tea together in the lodgings he made so celebrated; and Wilde was the greatest votary of the Tea God I have ever come across in my life, as far as *men* at least are concerned. I had just been telling him that my mother accused *him* of being a paradox; and he had a great respect for my mother, rare indeed for him, since he was much too much and too easily admired by women to have a very great esteem for them, that is of course admired by them in a blind adulatory way, which is really an insult. Perhaps the simple secret of his respect for my own mother's mental attitude, so entirely opposed to everything which he himself advocated, lay in his knowledge that she was one of the few women he came in contact with whom he did not dazzle, he this said either in her defence or against her, according to what are your own views.

'Besides,' he would say, passing his cup for at least the third time to whoever was pouring out the tea, 'paradox is the only truth.' Or he would put it in another way: 'Nothing positive ever can be right,' qualifying this with '*Nature* is never definite.'

On other occasions I recollect his saying that 'Life is an aggregation of paradoxes,' or 'a succession of paradoxes.' And he qualified it by stating that 'Antithesis is the accompaniment of every movement in life'; while, to those who were disposed to dispute this point of view, he would say, 'A paradox is a truth unfolded in seemingly untrue words.'

To return to what he used to observe about writing, let me quote: 'Tact applied to writing is *style* in Literature'; 'Nothing is further from Literature than Journalism,' and in this connection he would cite the baneful influence of early training in the latter profession in the cases of Dickens, Charles Reade, and even Stevenson and Kipling: 'The three essentials in composition are Imagina-

tion, Creation and Expression'; 'Whatever your subject may be, at least make it *interesting*,' this being evoked by Gladstone's wonderful report on the Budget; 'Painting is Literature done in pigments instead of words, with colours in place of ink'; 'Never give a reader too much for his money in way of *quantity*'; 'Don't be a writer or an artist if you can *possibly* help it; if you can't, then *Heaven* help you'; 'Fiction dare not be as strange as Truth'; 'The actual writing is the least part of a composition,' for he was always insisting on much thought and little manual labour; 'No one can do artistic work when in a thoroughly normal condition'; 'Few people are worthy of being put into Fiction.'

The next period after boyhood, and apart from the question of my career, when I came in contact with Wilde and profited by his eminently sane counsel, was that of the lover, when, as he himself expressed it, I had the disease particularly badly. To those who know of his penetrating scepticism in regard to woman in the aggregate, he may seem to have been a strange *confidant* in this respect; but, at all events I had no other. And he encouraged me to come to him, too, about these *affaires*, which seemed to be a perpetual source of amusement to him, though he would constantly damp my ardour by such expressions as these:

'It is much better "to have loved and lost" than to have loved and won'; 'The so-called "arts of woman" are crude enough, and would not deceive a man were he not already an ass'; 'There is nothing so selfish as love or so unscrupulous; so sacrificing—*of the other person*'; 'There is one thing infinitely more pathetic than to have lost the woman one is in love with, and that is to have won her and found out how shallow she is'; 'Woman's appeal is to the lowest in man'; 'It is mainly due to woman that the World is so backward in civilisation'; 'Passion is about the very worst material with which to build a home.'

Other things which I recollect his saying about love and woman were: 'Nothing is more immoral than marriage'; 'There is nothing so compromising as benevolence to the opposite sex'; 'A poor woman who is not straight is a prostitute, but a rich one is a lady of fashion'; 'There are all kinds and degrees of *men*, but there are only two sorts of *women*, the good and the bad.'

It amused him immensely, in my people's opposition to my going on the Stage, their saying that it would be all right if I were an actor like Irving or Wyndham, but not to be a *third-rater*, particularly as he knew something of Irving's long struggle before

his recognition; and I think it was Oscar Wilde's sympathy more than anything else which made me put my resolution into force, though on account of my family's opposition it entailed my going to America to do so.

Less than two years later I returned from the States, a country he knew very well but which he did not love, though I am sure he made more money there than ever at home. We often discussed that land henceforth in our meetings. He called Americans 'the vulgar branch of the Anglo-Saxon race,' and said 'it were easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle' than for an American to be a gentleman; and, when I remarked that a camel *could* go through the eye of a needle, he replied 'the other thing is also *possible*,' and said he himself had known instances of it.

However, at other times he was more generous, and would admit there was much good in that people; but he would then add, 'though you'd never suspect it, *meeting them in Paris*.'

He also called their country 'the Republic of Vulgaria' and I remember his saying that in public life there a man was considered honest who admitted himself to be a rogue. As to the American artist and art student in Paris, he observed that to such an one a studio on Montmartre—nowadays he would have said *Mont Parnasse*!—'was like occupying a grotto on Mount Parnassus.'

Of the American tourist he once remarked to me: 'Americans should never be allowed out alone in Europe—least of all *in Paris*'; and he described the United States as being divided into 'the chivalrous nigger-lynching South, the sordid North, the hypocritical East, and the blatant West'; and remarked that 'an American's idea of happiness is to spend a lot of money.'

But he once admitted that 'the United States was a country which had much that Europe lacked, and lacked much that Europe had'; and, on my saying that I much preferred the American in his own land than when he comes abroad, he replied that 'the good American stays at home,' immediately adding 'to judge by those *one sees here*.'

On my complaining of the number of snobs I had run across in 'the land of the free and the home of the brave,' republican though he always professed himself, he admitted that 'There is nothing so undemocratic as Democracy'; and, comparing the open political corruption there with the covert giving of titles in return for political support in England, he once said, 'The United States is an example of honest dishonesty, England of dishonest

honesty.' Of the spitting habit over there he remarked, 'In America life is one long expectoration.'

He was as kind and sympathetic about my stage career and aspirations as he had formerly been ironical and discouraging in my love affairs. Particularly was he pleased with my observing in the heat of the young stager's enthusiasm that I considered the theatre the real life and the world outside it the illusion. To this he said, 'There is no reality in *life*. *Art* is the only reality.' Speaking of the average theatre-goer's criticism of actors, I remember his observing that 'the only thing the public knows about Art, either theatrical or other, is whether a thing is *natural* or not; of the technically artistic they know about as much as the man in the Moon,' by which of course he meant that they know rather less than nothing at all. Private theatricals, which were then much in vogue, he held in utter scorn; and once, when a parvenu family even went so far as to indulge in a *Shakespeare* play, he said to me in indignation, 'Why, one must learn *even to cut hair*; and yet people seem to think writing and acting come by Nature! I wonder how they would like to wear *clothes* produced in that way.'

Politics ran high in those days, and it ran particularly high in our set, which included such extreme views as those of Ruskin, William Morris, and Justin McCarthy. My grandmother's family, as I remember it, had apparently a representative of every shade of opinion of the day, from White-Rose High-Church Jacobites to Irish Nationalists bordering on Fenianism. I myself was what would now be called an intellectual anarchist; and Wilde, I suppose because no such party has ever been in England since the Civil War and Cromwell's time, went in for being a republican, Roman Catholic though he was; and I use the expression 'went in for' advisedly. I have always been sceptical as to how far people are really interested in Politics beyond the point where it affects their personal self-interest; and certainly neither Wilde nor I cared a farthing rushlight about it. But where there was a significant difference between us two and people in general in this respect was that the latter always *believe* they are interested in Politics, which we never for one moment ever deceived ourselves into doing. This enabled us to discuss the peculiar tenets with which each chose to label himself with feelings as far as possible away from anything the least resembling either fanaticism or rancour. Nor did our discussions ever take on any other of the

colours usual in arguments of the kind, for neither ever contended that the peculiar tenets he advocated were for the *benefit* of mankind, but quite the contrary, at least as to *immediate result*; for, while I argued that a strong dose of Anarchy would do the discontented British public a world of good, he, for his part, strongly recommended a '*temporary*' republic for making the same 'un-thinking animal,' as he would express it, 'jolly glad to have a queen and an aristocracy *again*'; and would quote the England of the Restoration and the United States of America as points in favour of his contention.

We also argued more from the position of the good of Art and *Æsthetics* than from any other; and, though our discussions on this head—I mean Politics—were always of the briefest, they were not devoid of a certain *simulation* of heat with which by tacit consent we both instinctively invested them, though, at the conclusion, one or the other—by turns as it were—would give in to the arguments of his opponent, in this respect also very widely differing from other disputants; and I remember on one occasion, when he had exhausted even *his* fertile imagination and fluent rhetoric in depicting a utopian democratic government, he concluded by admitting that 'Governments are like maiden aunts, damned bad things *at the best*.'

Speaking of a particularly incompetent person who, we had just heard, had been given a very responsible government appointment, he at once remarked, 'Indeed it could only have been by some wholly unaccountable and hitherto unheard of oversight that a person so utterly incapable should *not* have been *rewarded* with some exalted government post.'

'How is it,' I once asked him, 'that people who are not possessed of a single other virtue should come out at times as patriots?' 'Exaggerated patriotism,' he answered, 'is the most insincere form of self-conceit.' And at another time he said, 'Patriotism is the virtue of the vicious.'

His opinion of diplomats he summed up pretty concisely by observing that 'The best diplomat is he who talks most and says least.'

In one of our peculiar discussions, when, on his claiming that republics were older than monarchies, and my replying that therefore *to go back* to them was reaction rather than progress, he answered that 'Reaction is often *the truest form* of progress'; and he also claimed that 'Nothing is so traditionary as revolution.'

He always told me that, like myself, he had never voted in his life, on which account he plumed himself as a truer patriot than those who did so; for, as he put it, 'The country is usually better served by a man's not voting than by his voting'; and there is certainly something to think of in *that*!

Yet it was when he came to speak of what is called 'Society with a capital S,' or more vulgarly 'High life,' that Oscar Wilde was at his best; but of his ironies and witticisms in that respect I have such a host of recollections that they must be put aside for an occasion when more space is still at my disposal; and, instead, I shall end with two irrelevant sayings of his which I have never seen in any book or journal by or about him:

'Nature is hopelessly immoral'; and, 'Exaggeration is the gift of describing as fact what has not really happened.'

THE STONE THAT MOVED.

BY F. S. SMYTHE.

ONCE upon a time (and not very long ago either) there lived a young cowherd in a tiny chalet by the side of a big glacier. He was a lonely cowherd, because his father and mother were both dead and his brothers and sisters had gone forth to seek their fortunes in the world. His name was Hans Teurer, and he owned three cows. Few people ever came that way because of the menacing aspect of the glacier, and the mountains on either side, which were very steep. But one day, there came to Hans' chalet an old man with a long white beard, and the old man said: 'I am very hot, and have sweated like the Devil—that is to say, perspired exceedingly—give me a glass of milk.'

So Hans gave him a glass of milk, and after that several more glasses, because the old man was very thirsty.

And when the old man had finished drinking the milk, he said: 'How much?'

And Hans, not knowing the value of money, answered: 'That will be three francs (Swiss), at one franc per glass.'

The old man paid, but then he looked at Hans and said: 'One day you will be a rich man, and own a Palace Hotel.'

And Hans said: 'That will be very nice. How long will it be before I own a Palace Hotel?'

And the old man pointed up the glacier, and said: 'You see that big stone lying on the ice?'

'Yes,' said Hans, 'I see it, for it fell down from that steep mountain last spring with a great noise.'

'Did it though!' exclaimed the old man. 'I must certainly make a note of it.' And he made a note of it, then he continued: 'When that stone is lying on the glacier opposite this spot, you will own a Palace Hotel, and be a rich man, but after it has passed by you will be poor again,' and he shook his head.

'But how can the stone move down the glacier?' enquired Hans with a puzzled look.

'I never said the stone moved down the glacier,' said the old man testily, 'the glacier moves the stone down.'

'But how can the glacier move?' said Hans, still with the puzzled look.

'Well, it does,' said the old man, still testily, 'and I am a Professor, and have come here to measure its movement.' And he strode off, taking with him his knapsack, which Hans noticed was filled with little pointed pegs of wood. But before he was out of earshot, he turned round and shouted, 'Thank God I shall be dead before your infernal Palace Hotel is built.'

And for the remainder of that day Hans, watching, saw the old man putting the little pegs of wood into the ice across the glacier, and lying flat down to see whether they were in a straight line. And once Hans noticed the old man lay for so long flat upon the ice that his beard, which was beneath him, froze into the ice so that he had great difficulty in getting up again. And in the evening, the old man returned, but he did not stop at Hans' chalet for milk because it was cooler, and he was not so thirsty.

And that was the last Hans ever saw of the old man, because when he (the old man) got back to civilisation he published a long treatise on the movement of glaciers, and even read papers to the Royal Geographical Society, the Alpine Club, and other learned bodies. After which he died, and was buried with much honour.

And as a result of the old man's treatises and papers, other people came to visit the glacier by Hans' chalet, and to see the big stone lying on the ice, and they all stopped at Hans' chalet for milk; even a King, whom Hans charged three francs per glass instead of one franc because he was a King, and could *afford to pay*. Indeed, the only one who did not stop to drink milk at Hans' chalet was a red-haired man, who said that the price was perrrrfectly absurrd, and *he* carried a bottle of whisky, which he drank off without taking breath, after which he fell into one of the crevasses on the glacier and died.

And as a result of so many people paying so many francs for so many glasses of milk, Hans soon found that he had enough capital to build a small inn, which would seat more people wanting to drink. And when he had built the inn, there was enough money over to buy a mule and hire a man to bring bottles of beer up from the valley. And because the mule and the mule driver cost a lot of money, he charged five francs each for the bottles of beer. But everyone paid without a murmur, except one old man, who said it was scandalous imposition, and wrote a letter to *The Times*. But even in spite of that people still paid five

francs for each bottle of beer, which even when the mule and the mule driver were taken into consideration represented a *substantial profit* for Hans. Also, Hans was helped by the publication of a Guidebook, which mentioned the glacier and the big stone, and put three stars against it in the context. And many more people came to see the glacier and the big stone, because the three stars meant that they were *really worth seeing*.

And by and by, Hans had saved so much money that he could afford to build a Palace Hotel, and there people stayed who wanted to see the sun rise. And because the sunrise was sometimes a very beautiful one, Hans charged them twenty-five francs each for dinner, bed and breakfast, which again represented a *substantial profit* even though he now had to pay for several mules and mule drivers to bring things up to the hotel. And in spite of paying twenty-five francs, it was no uncommon thing to see people leaning out from their bedroom windows, early in the morning, and exclaiming 'Wunderschön!' or 'Magnifique!' or 'Marvelous!' as they watched the sunrise.

Also, there were many other things that Hans did. He dug out a hole in the ice of the glacier every summer, which he called an Ice Grotto, and charged people fifty centimes to go into it, which, even when he had paid a man something to take the money at the entrance, represented a *substantial profit*. Also, he paid a guide to take people for an excursion on the glacier at five francs per excursion of not more than three people, and as the guide sometimes took a hundred people in a day, and was paid by Hans ten francs for so doing, it does not require an intricate calculation to show that here again Hans made a *substantial profit*. Also, because the ice was slippery, the people had to wear socks over their shoes to prevent them from tumbling over, and these socks Hans supplied at two francs a pair, which again represented a *substantial profit*, because they were only cotton socks, which Hans bought at fifty centimes per pair. Also, when the people had made the excursion on the glacier, they were very proud of themselves, because Hans always told them afterwards that the glacier was a very dangerous one, and that a man had once slipped into one of the crevasses, and been killed (he quite forgot, however, to tell them about the whisky the man drank beforehand). So when they returned after their excursion, they were glad to pay three francs for a certificate telling them how brave they had been. And this certificate only cost Hans fifty centimes, taking into

consideration the cost of paper and printing, so here again he made a *substantial profit*.

Then, there was a place above the hotel where there was a fine echo, which people were always glad to listen to. So Hans hired a boy with large lungs, and paid him five francs a day to blow through a big horn at fifty centimes per blow, an accomplishment which occasioned much pleasure to the people who listened, and which brought Hans in a *substantial profit*.

Also Hans bought a large telescope for which he paid a large sum of money, on the hire-purchase system, through which people who were too nervous to make the excursion on the glacier could look at the other people who were brave enough to do it, and also sometimes intrepid mountaineers who were scaling the surrounding peaks. But though the telescope cost a lot of money, even on the hire-purchase system, it did not need to have a man to collect the money, as there was an automatic twenty-centimes-in-the-slot arrangement, which enabled every person to look through the telescope for two minutes. So the telescope very soon paid for itself, and afterwards made a *substantial profit* for Hans.

And all the time Hans was making money, he forgot about the big stone, which moved very, very slowly down the glacier, until one day it had arrived opposite to Hans' Palace Hotel. But even then, Hans was too busy to notice it, or remember what the old man with the white beard had said, because he was holding an important conference with a Fat Man in a wide waistcoat and black striped trousers.

And the Fat Man said, 'It is obvious that it would pay to build a railway up to this place, and I am indeed thinking of doing so.'

And Hans agreed that it would be an excellent idea, for if there was a railway, there would be many more people, and he would make more money. The only drawback was that the people who came by railway would be less thirsty than the people who walked. But even in spite of that it would pay him, as more people would stop the night to see the sun rise, go on the glacier and in the ice grotto, buy socks and certificates, listen to the echo, and look through the telescope. So he said that he thought it would be a very good thing.

And the Fat Man said that if there was a railway, would Hans be prepared to lower his prices, otherwise not enough people would come up the railway to make it pay, and the railway company wanted to advertise a cheap return fare which would

include dinner, bed, breakfast and the sunrise. The glacier, certificates, ice grotto, socks, echo and telescope would, of course, be extra, he said, but even there it would be a good thing if cheap prices could be advertised.

But Hans got very angry, and said, 'It is obvious that you are thinking more of your railway than of my Palace Hotel.'

And the Fat Man said, 'On the contrary, you will do better, because though your profits are less, you will get many more people.'

But Hans said, 'If people come here to see my beautiful sunrises, and go on my beautiful glacier, buy my beautiful certificates, listen to my beautiful echo, and look through my beautiful telescope, they ought to damn well pay for it.'

And the Fat Man was very shocked, not at Hans' swearing, but at him splitting his infinitive so badly, and he said, 'Well, if you won't lower your prices, we must buy your Hotel. How much do you want for it?'

But Hans got even more angry, and shouted, 'I won't sell my Palace Hotel at any price. No, not for a million francs!'

'Well, if you won't, you won't,' said the Fat Man, and drinking the remainder of his beer, which had been supplied to him free by Hans, because it was a conference, he rose to go.

And Hans said still angrily, 'I shall get on quite well without your beastly railway, which after all will spoil the scenery.' And at the thought of the scenery that would be spoilt by the railway, he got still angrier, and said, 'If I can stop the railway, I will.'

But the Fat Man only smiled sarcastically, and said, 'I don't think you will, because we have already got the concession.'

'Well, build your perfectly foul railway!' said Hans, rudely, 'I don't care!'

'You will, though,' said the Fat Man, and getting on his mule, he started off down the path, for he was not used to walking, and his patent leather boots were very tight and pointed.

And Hans, looking after him, laughed and said to himself, 'That's a very cunning man, but he has met a cunninger. He will build his railway just the same, and I shall make lots of money.' And he went back into his Palace Hotel, rubbing his hands, and quite forgetting what the old man had said about the stone.

And next year sure enough the Fat Man began to build the railway up and up from the valley, and Hans went on rubbing his hands gleefully, when he thought of all the people that the

railway would bring up. But he had quite forgotten about the big stone which was now well past his Palace Hotel.

And by and by, when the railway reached nearly half-way to Hans' Palace Hotel, Hans went up to one of the men working on it and said, 'Come into my Palace Hotel and drink some beer, and tell me all about the station you are going to build. I hope it will be a good one. There is a nice level bit of ground just outside the front door that will do admirably.'

And the man, when he had drunk the beer, and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, replied: 'Station! There ain't going to be no station. Leastways, not 'ere.' Only he didn't say it quite like that, because he was a German-Swiss.

'No station!' stuttered Hans. 'What do you mean, no station?'

'What I says,' said the man, for he could afford to be rude now that he had drunk all the beer Hans had given him. 'This 'ere ain't the end of the line. It's going a long way past your blinkin' 'otel.'

'Going past my Palace Hotel!' screamed Hans. 'How can it go past my Palace Hotel? It is impossible! Incredible!' And he burst into tears, and stamped round the room saying all manner of bad things about the Fat Man, who was building the railway. But the very next day, when he had recovered his temper, Hans went down into the valley to interview the Fat Man in his palatial office. And Hans said to him: 'What's all this I hear about your railway going past my Palace Hotel?'

And the Fat Man took the long cigar he was smoking out of his mouth, and having knocked the ash on to the floor, for his wife was not there, said: 'There is a much better place farther up, where the view is worth much more than that from your Palace Hotel. There I am going to build my station and a Metropole Hotel, which will be three times the size of your Palace Hotel.'

Then Hans went white, and wobbly at the knees, and as soon as he could say anything without being rude, he said: 'Then you don't want to buy my Palace Hotel?'

'Your Palace Hotel?' said the Fat Man. 'Oh, no; I don't want to buy that now. I have formed a limited company, a limited company that will make unlimited money.' And he laughed very heartily, as though he had made a very good joke.

But Hans thought; perhaps if I sell my Palace Hotel to him, and invest the money in his limited company, he may give me a

good price, and I shall make a good thing out of my investment. So he told the Fat Man about this idea. And the Fat Man said that it might be done, only the hotel was worth only a very little, now that the railway was being built past it. And then, for the next three hours, they haggled and haggled and haggled as to what price the Fat Man should give Hans for his Palace Hotel. And at last they agreed, Hans getting a better price than he had expected because it was agreed, also, that he should invest all the purchase money in the Fat Man's limited company. And at last, when everything was completed, and Hans had invested all the money in the Fat Man's company, Hans went away, taking with him two of the long cigars, which the Fat Man had very generously given him, feeling that he hadn't done so badly after all, especially as the Fat Man said that he could become manager of the new Metropole Hotel if he wanted to.

And directly Hans had left the room, the Fat Man rang up a friend, and having after three wrong numbers got the right one said: 'Hullo, Fred, you remember that hotel you were so keen on buying? Well, I've just bought it, though I've had to pay the devil of a price for it, but if you still want it you can have it for what I gave for it, just as a matter of friendliness,' and he named a sum three times as much as he had paid Hans for it.

But Fred said: 'What about that railway you're building?'

'Ah!' replied the Fat Man. 'Now you've asked something, Fred!' and he looked very sly. 'Fact is, old man, the company's gone phut. It cost more than double we thought it would putting down the track alone. But it's a limited company, and I don't stand to lose anything out of it.'

'No, I don't expect you do,' said Fred, 'you've got a good bit out of me for that hotel. But if you take my advice, old man, you'll clear out until things have quieted down a bit.'

'I intend to, as soon as I've your cheque for that hotel,' replied the Fat Man. 'I'll come along right away and collect it.'

And that was how Hans lost his Palace Hotel. He is still alive, and acts as a guide for the present proprietor. He is a very old man now, and his favourite excursion is to take people to see the big stone lying on the glacier. It is a long way past the Palace Hotel now, and very near the end of the glacier, and the people, with socks over their shoes, stand looking at it, wondering how it got there.

THE POWDER MONKEY.

BELIEVE me, if all those delectable things
 Which encumber your toilet to-day,
 My youthful enchantress, could take themselves wings,
 And be wafted discreetly away :
 I should worship you more than I worship you now,
 Like a star shining after eclipse,
 With the pallor of artifice gone from your brow,
 And the crooked red line from your lips.

What *can* be the motive ? I do but surmise
 That you ply these astonishing arts,
 In fear that the light of your luminous eyes
 Should set fire to susceptible hearts.
 So, although you be fair as a lily in bloom,
 And as fresh as the breeze on the down,
 Yet in mercy for us you prefer to assume
 The make-up of a pantomime clown.

Those lips, with their crimson adornment, may scoff
 In contempt at this old-fashioned line,
 Still I'll tilt at my windmill, and not be put off,
 When you say it's no business of mine ;
 I can see, and you can't, O Devotion's Desire,
 So in kindness my protest is made ;
 As a baffled admirer's, who may not admire,
 You should welcome my friendly crusade.

It is nothing to me what defences you try
 When the threat of Time's onset appears ;
 I know not, I care not, what mysteries lie
 In the lap of the envious years ;
 But while as at present, unaided, alone,
 You may flout—if you can—their advance,
 While the glories of Beauty and Youth are your own,
 You had much better give them a chance.

ALFRED COCHRANE.

THE OLD ENGLISH PARTRIDGE.

'The red-legged partridge, too, must yield
 To that of Britain's wood and field,
 Though gayer vest he wears.
 For *bon vivants* and sportsmen say
 Superior far the British grey.'

J. P. H.

ACCORDING to the sages, any man who claims to possess a complete understanding of the opposite sex must be regarded as a person whose statements should be accepted with reserve. Upon the same principle, he who knows all there is to be known about the elusive partridge—that homely and yet most fascinating of all game-birds—must be indeed an able student of bird psychology as well as a past-master of venery.

Studying the partridge year after year, noting the clockwork regularity of his general habits, as well as his many unaccountable moods and idiosyncrasies, one discovers how much there is yet to learn about this remarkably wild inhabitant of our cultivated lands. Whatever the partridge may once have been, and in whatever manner birds of his extensive family contrived to pick up a living, there can be no doubt that he now thrives best in a land of man-made plenty. As certainly, though more subtly than the rook, he follows the plough. And just as rapidly or slowly as our diminishing ploughland reverts to pasture, the passing of the partridge will follow as a matter of course.

Why this should be the case is one of the many problems that baffle both naturalist and sportsman. The case of the hill-partridge—that bird of the 'fruitful fells,' who can and does exist upon heights where tillage is unknown—is frequently and quite reasonably cited by those inclined to dispute the lowland partridge's dependent state. The fact, I fear, remains none the less incontrovertible, and proof of it may be seen upon every side. Take, for example, the rough hill-farms of the West, now mainly pasturage, where very little wheat is grown, the root and corn crops being limited to a barely sufficient quantity of turnips, potatoes and oats to supply the needs of the farm, household and stock. Not so long

ago, this was excellent partridge country, two or three guns being able to account for anything up to thirty brace in a day on a two-hundred-acre farm. Now, under existing conditions, anyone who attempts to raise more than a strictly limited number of birds is foredoomed to disappointment. Whatever stock one leaves, the result is the same, year after year. The land will positively maintain no more than a seemingly prescribed number of coveys, varying somewhat of course according to locality. Such at any rate is the conclusion to which one is reluctantly forced after years of experiment and failure.

In a recent issue of the *Field* (July 27th, 1929) various opinions are quoted as to the number of partridges that it is advisable to leave for stock, one brace to six or seven acres being considered an instance of understocking. Upon this scale of reckoning one may assume that at least one pair of birds should be left for every five acres of land, which would mean twenty pairs to an ordinary hundred-acre farm. In that case I rather imagine that the majority of West-Country sportsmen would not expend many cartridges, since he would be compelled to leave more birds than the land is capable of producing. Indeed, upon a rough shoot in Devonshire at the present moment we should consider ourselves well supplied if every fifty acres of ground could yield one good covey. I have left practically an entire season's stock in hopes of obtaining better results, only to find the same story repeated the following year, the prescribed number of coveys, no more, no less, and in this connection an interesting question arises: What becomes of the surplus birds? Fifty perhaps are left, and remain unmolested, so far as one can judge, throughout the year. The following summer five broods are produced, leaving forty old birds unaccounted for. They have literally vanished into thin air, and one rarely sees them again, except, curiously enough, in a wet or otherwise disastrous hatching season, when the young broods are practically exterminated; when the disconsolate parents are flushed still in pairs, and the few coveys one comes across consist of wary and in every sense tough old bachelors and spinsters. On one occasion during just such a season, I well remember a covey of nine which rose from a patch of clover in front of four guns and was practically annihilated. Seven of the number fell, and all proved to be old cocks.

Why these old stagers under ordinary circumstances give place to the young broods—as they certainly appear to do—and in that case what becomes of them, are questions more easily asked than

answered. There are, of course, always barren pairs which one comes across every year. It is probable too that a few cock birds fall in amorous fight, though this is not generally believed, a corresponding number of ladies being left unmated in consequence. These doubtless join other sisters in misfortune, or attach themselves singly to growing coveys, after the manner of certain female birds in such a case. There is reason for believing that old and barren birds frequently adopt the latter course, installing themselves in the establishments of younger hens whom they can bully, this accounting for the cunning old 'leaders' with which one has so frequently to cope. Aggressive old cocks, again, are more than likely to expel a certain number of younger males from the district, for which reason partridges are supposed to become more plentiful in localities where they are habitually 'driven' to the guns. The old gentleman, keen to preserve his own skin and alive only to the danger behind, is usually the first to top the fence, and, heading the flight, is picked off by the concealed gunner. When 'walked up' on the other hand, as often as not he is up and under full headway before a gun is levelled, and one or other of his followers falls in his stead. And so he remains to frustrate the natural order of things in the pairing season.

That so essentially wild a bird as the partridge should be dependent upon artificial conditions seems inconsistent with his character and with that of game birds in general. True, he is more self-supporting than the pheasant, who cannot hold his own for any length of time without active human assistance in the form of frequent re-introduction. The pheasant, however, being scarcely indigenous, is outside the argument. The partridge, on the contrary, is a native, and until within comparatively recent years was as plentifully represented in the British Isles as anywhere. Given favourable conditions, there appears to be no reason why he should not hold his own, and within certain limits he stands a better chance when allowed to fend for himself. Since no conditions are strictly natural, however, occasions may arise upon which a little help, judiciously tendered, is advisable if not actually necessary. During exceptionally severe weather, for example, a little artificial feeding can do no harm and may do much good. At such times one feeds the wild birds of the garden and shrubbery as a matter of course, so why not the partridges? There is no reason for supposing their case to be any better than that of the thrushes and finches. To cater for them upon an extensive scale may be difficult or even

impossible, but to provide them with a measure of relief should not be beyond the capacity of anyone. It is usually only a matter of arrangement with the farmer, who seldom fails to produce a bag or two of 'seconds,' or at worst a supply of 'dowse' (residue from threshing), which makes all the difference to the partridges. In some parts of the country it is considered a point almost of honour not to rake the headlands too closely, or to leave a few of the outside sheaves 'in the hedge-troughs for the birds.' There can be no doubt that they appreciate the attention.

Again, in thinly stocked country it is unquestionable that a certain amount of inbreeding must take place, which inevitably weakens the strain and lowers its producing capacity. This can only be remedied by introducing fresh blood—a step attended with some difficulty. The 'turning down' of adult birds in the spring is rarely satisfactory upon a 'beat' of moderate dimensions. The birds, even if sound, are more likely than not to wander out of bounds, and several years may elapse before any obvious benefit is derived. The desired end is, perhaps, best attained by an interchange of eggs, the clutches of wild birds being removed and replaced by others before the hens begin to sit. Keepers upon large beats frequently adopt this plan which commends itself by virtue of its simplicity. The preserver upon a minor scale, who perhaps employs no keeper, can often effect an advantageous exchange with a friend at a few miles' distance. It is only necessary for each to locate one or two nests, judiciously extract a few eggs, and substitute them for a corresponding number obtained from the other man's shoot. With ordinary care there is no reason why the experiment should not succeed every time.

Undoubtedly, the partridge should be able to exist unaided anywhere upon our soil, and his case at the moment rather suggests the loss of that instinct which enabled him to do so, or perhaps the formation of a new instinct due to changing conditions. However that may be, one seeks him now upon cultivated land, and there only with any real confidence, though one finds him now and again upon dry grass, or brushy slopes. Insectivorous bird as he is, he has acquired a liking for grain and other carefully nurtured 'fruits of the earth,' which he now appears to find essential to his economy. It is probable, too, that he finds less difficulty in procuring his insect food upon broken ground, while loose dry earth has a particular attraction for him. Upon this account, he is particularly fond of a potato-field, since there he can scratch about

to his heart's content between the rows, have as many dust-baths as he pleases, dig for grubs in the easily crumbling ridges, and peck at the potatoes themselves, if so disposed, like a pheasant or a barn-door fowl. Incidentally, most wild creatures are fond of potatoes, not excepting red deer. An old stag, using horn and hoof, will dig a row as efficiently—so far at least as the crop is concerned—as a human workman.

Time-honoured as are the conventional methods of seeking and circumventing the partridge, there comes a time when the bird, for causes known only to himself, refuses to be conventional. One seeks him vainly in all his accustomed haunts, and though several coveys may be known to lie somewhere in the vicinity, the closest search proves unavailing. Sometimes, no doubt, they have really gone, having discovered preferable conditions, in the form of better crops, upon the land of some neighbour. More frequently, however, they are lying somewhere near, or have taken cover, as they do upon certain days with exasperating persistency at the first hint of danger. Upon these occasions they frequently baffle any dogs that may accompany the party by taking a short flight, so quitting the field without leaving any tell-tale record to betray their line of retreat. Once down again, they run for any cover that may be handy, as likely as not creeping into some unsuspecting-looking little thicket where nobody dreams of looking for them. This may happen two or three times in the course of a day, which is perhaps rendered a complete failure in consequence. Many a covey, too, is passed, particularly in large fields, or at that stage of the proceedings when the search has been long and fruitless, and some member of the party, discouraged and perhaps a trifle disgruntled, cuts corners or neglects to walk the ground properly. In root-crops the birds are peculiarly liable to run ahead for some distance before rising, and it is a common trick of theirs to retreat to an extreme corner or a ditch, where they squat and frequently escape notice. For September partridges, at any rate, a field that is worth trying at all is worth trying thoroughly, though this is a rule somewhat difficult to enforce in a purely amateur shooting-party.

They are always more difficult to find during abnormally hot weather, as many sportsmen have discovered to their cost during the last two Septembers, the prevailing theory being that the birds retire to heavy cover, river-banks, mud-holes, etc., since 'they must have shade and water.' Personal experience, however, rarely

bears out this supposition, nor is the argument in its favour quite convincing. Partridges are fond of warmth. They love nothing better than to dust themselves upon some sunny bank or gently sloping dry fallow at midday, and as for shade—if they require it—they could find no cooler resting-place than underneath the spreading leaves of some luxuriant root-crop which hold the dew even at noon. Their supposed need of water, moreover, suggests an important question: When and where do wild birds drink? Sand grouse, we know, are shot in incredible quantities along the banks of the Nile, as they come in from the Desert, but who has ever seen a covey of English partridges go to water? Moisture they must have, but this they procure, especially during hot weather, from the dew-soaked herbage as well as from the succulent grubs that form so large a part of their diet.

What actually becomes of the birds under such conditions is another question. For my own part I do not believe that they take shelter in thick woods or brakes. Heavy cover constitutes the final refuge rather than the chosen haunt of the partridge. It is too full of lurking enemies to offer him a safe retreat. That is why he roosts for choice upon a bare bleak pasture, across which neither fox nor stoat can readily approach unperceived. The point, however, is not easily settled, since one does not try the woodlands closely during September for fear of disturbing the pheasants.

All considered, their non-appearance is probably due to a variety of causes rather than to any decided action on the part of the birds themselves. For one thing, the search is seldom so thorough upon a really hot day. The energy of man and dog perhaps unwittingly slackens. Again there is very little scent. The dogs get no news of runners, and, even as in hunting a bad scent makes 'short-running' foxes, as surely under similar conditions is it responsible for unaccommodating partridges. It must also be remembered that the hot days which so often coincide with the harvest moon are almost uncannily still. No breath of wind waves the green sea of root-tops to blind the movements of approaching enemies. The hard ground vibrates to the incautious footfall—for the keenest sportsman rarely gives himself the additional exertion of treading warily when the thermometer registers 80°. The birds get early warning of the approach of danger, and, creeping away unperceived, as often as not escape altogether. More than once within my experience sheer accident has betrayed some such manoeuvre, which in the ordinary course of events would have proved entirely success-

ful. There can be no doubt that during hot dry weather the birds have recourse to pedestrianism rather than flight upon every possible occasion, and in this, I think, lies the key to the riddle. They retreat before the guns like wary guerrillas at the advance of a superior fighting force, concealing their movements as only partridges can, and, excepting the rare occasions upon which one catches sight of them in the act, nobody is the wiser. If the dogs are aware of it, they are not always given an opportunity of disclosing their knowledge.

One might further remark that the birds are no easier to find during hot periods upon farms which lack cover in which they might take refuge. They disappear in the same unaccountable manner, only to announce their presence in the cool of evening when the persistent call-notes sound as though in mockery across the darkening stubbles. Curiously enough, the farm upon which I have experienced the least difficulty this season contains more heavy cover than any in the district, but the birds in every case were lying in the open, mostly upon grass.

In the exercise of genuine strategy no game-bird excels the partridge. A pheasant frequently saves himself by the free use of his inexhaustible legs, but the less nimble partridge owes many a triumph to pure guile, of which I saw a remarkable instance quite recently. We were trying a long sloping field, stocked with mangolds and potatoes, flanked on the higher side by a lane, on the lower by a sedgy wood and the narrow end of a clover field. The birds, a remarkably fine covey and strong on the wing, rose well ahead of the guns, barely within shot, and two only fell out of a liberal fifteen. The remainder skimmed the length of the field, topped a high beech-hedge, and alighted apparently in the far corner of an adjoining meadow, close beside a thick fir plantation in which we had little doubt of refinding them. For safety's sake, however, we carefully tried the grass and one or two neighbouring fields, then proceeded to beat through the planting, making havoc amongst a flock of pigeons that happened to be resting there, but without discovering another trace of the partridges which had vanished in their own peculiar way. Everyone was puzzled. Theoretically, one should never be surprised at anything where partridges are concerned. Actually each fresh instance of their elusiveness creates the old wonder anew, and this case, as usual, seemed particularly remarkable. It had been to all intents and purposes a clear 'mark down,' though, owing to the height of the

hedge, nobody had seen them actually alight. Convinced, therefore, that they must be near, we quartered literally every yard of the surrounding fields, even making good on the farther side of the lane, though it was obvious to the meanest intelligence that no bird could possibly have crossed. Completely baffled, we at last returned to the clover field, scarcely even hoping to find them there, since it lay well on the wrong side of the beech-hedge, which they had been seen to clear easily. The search, in consequence, was perfunctory, the chances of a second covey thereabouts being nil, and, more than prepared to admit defeat, we were actually making for the gate, when a keen-sighted member of the party caught sight of something that looked like a long brown snake trickling up a bank into the wood at the higher corner, just below the original root-field. This, needless to say, proved to be the partridges, again upon the run, and though we eventually 'got them up,' we gave a poor account of ourselves in the wood where the cover was too blind for accurate shooting. How they contrived to get back to the clover unperceived in the first instance is a problem that even now can only be solved by conjecture. There can, however, be little doubt about the tactics they adopted. Alighting, as we originally supposed, in the corner of the meadow, they must have crept into a cross-hedge, allowed one or two of us to pass within a few feet of them, then, running back along the bank, regained the beech-fence, and, taking a short flight—the dogs could scarcely have failed to catch their line had they continued to run—sought final refuge among the fragrant clover buds. The remaining birds have so far evaded all efforts upon our part to renew acquaintance with them, from which one may assume that the crafty old leader which they certainly possessed was not numbered among the fallen.

A little luck one way or other can make all the difference. Nobody has much use for the type of person with whom everything habitually goes wrong. Bad luck in sport, said old Rocky, 'ain't the explanation of success and failure,' and the endless recitals of the man in whose tracks

... 'unmerciful disaster
Followed fast and followed faster,
Till his song one burden bore,'

are seldom anything but tedious. There are days, however, when one can almost imagine oneself the victim of a special conspiracy.

Everyone seems utterly incapable of doing the right thing; the game is anywhere but where it should be; the best covey of the day is sprung by somebody's wild dog and never seen again; the farmer appears in the line of fire just at the critical moment; or the birds rise just when everyone is struggling over that awkward fence. These and a hundred other things may occur to try the most even temper, but a recent experience of two neighbours supplied, I think, as exasperating a *finale* to an unsuccessful day as anyone could desire. They had tramped the countryside for hours without as much as sighting a covey, and, thoroughly dispirited, were trudging across the very last field—a patch of kale—when at last a single partridge rose full in front of one of them. It was a positive sitter. Up went his gun, but instead of the expected shot, there sounded a mere hollow click. He had removed his cartridges when crossing the last fence, and from sheer apathy had neglected to replace them. Perceiving the situation, his companion fired in his stead—both barrels—long, hasty, and therefore entirely ineffectual shots, and, so doing, scared up two more birds from just in front of him, both of which he might have secured had he not already wasted his powder. The consoling reflection that others of the covey must be somewhere near heartened them somewhat, however. They both reloaded hastily, and had barely done so when another single bird arose nearly a gunshot ahead. A trifle flustered by this time, and hoping perhaps that quantity would supply the lack of quality, they discharged all four barrels in its wake, but without dislodging one of its feathers, and the fusillade scared up the remainder of the covey, which had been squatting within a few yards of them. Both guns being empty, they could only watch the birds as they winnowed away, over the field and a boundary hedge beyond.

When space is limited and coveys are none too plentiful, it is an excellent plan for men who perhaps cannot afford to rent large areas upon their own account to join forces. A large area, indeed, presents almost the only chance of enjoying really good sport nowadays. With birds comparatively scarce, as they are, it is heart-breaking to see the long-sought covey rise out of shot and sail with maddening deliberation over that fateful green line which marks the beginning of forbidden territory. It so frequently happens, too, in such cases, that a little foresight or generalship could have averted the catastrophe, which makes it all the more annoying. Strictly, of course, the possible should always be

treated as the probable, or more literally, every field tried with as much forethought as though a covey had actually been marked in. Between theory and practice, however, there is too often a wide gulf fixed, and so the inevitable happens. A mutual arrangement between neighbours, enabling each to cross the boundary in pursuit of his own birds saves a deal of heart-burning. One must be careful, however, as to the type of person with whom such an agreement is concluded. The new shooting tenant of the present day may well prove a Facey Romford, and the last state is rendered worse than the first. Incidentally, among farmers there is a pleasing convention in the matter of ferreting boundary hedges. Legally, the fence belongs to one man or other, that one holding the sole sporting rights. It is not considered etiquette, however, for him to try the hedge without inviting his neighbour to share the sport.

The psychology of partridge-shooting would provide an interesting study. There are men of lifelong experience who, form resolutions as they may, still lose their heads whenever a large covey bursts into whirring thrilling life in front of them. There is an old story—possibly the origin of Tupperman's famous achievement—of a man who in such a case invariably shut his eyes, invoked Fortune, and discharged both barrels. Fortune's response being meagre, her sanguine worshipper supplied the deficiency by claiming birds killed by his companions, who, with a tolerance remarkable in those rough and ready times, apparently refrained from breaking his head. The case recalls another story, told to me and vouched for by an old friend, concerning an otherwise excellent gentleman whose manipulation of a gun was so dangerous to everyone, except the game, that men shooting with him did so at imminent risk of life and limb. Being, however, one of the best-hearted men alive, also influential and possessor of the best partridge shooting in the county, he escaped the sentence of ostracism usually passed upon performers of his kind. Some measure of protection being necessary, however, local sportsmen put their heads together, and by a surreptitious arrangement with his loader the good gentleman was supplied with sufficiently vociferous but entirely harmless cartridges, so ensuring the safety of all concerned. To meet the one obvious difficulty, care was always taken to place him between two of the best shots, a share of whose spoils he never failed to claim. All being in the know, however, nobody minded. There were, I believe, anxious moments, particularly after lunch, when the good gentleman's too ready assumption of the laurels at times nearly resulted in home

truths and consequent disclosures. A little tact on the part of the host, however, sufficed to avert catastrophe, and he never to my knowledge suspected the conspiracy.

In the case of walked-up partridges, lucky shots are comparatively rare, and a really good analysis is the exception rather than the rule. There can be no 'picking' as with driven pheasants. One must accept the chances offered or none at all, and there are many things calculated to spoil the best average. Between two friends—a father and son—who shoot with me, there exists a friendly rivalry, and frequently the question arises as to the legitimate claimant of a bird that falls. The most recent experience of the father, which did not improve his chances in the competition, was characteristic of the sort of thing that occurs. A large covey rising before them, he carefully marked his bird, and was in the very act of firing when he saw it crumple up, the obvious trophy of another gun. He could not save his shot, however, which could only count as a wasted one. In the moment that remained he sought another chance, only to catch sight of a bird flying on with a leg down, and, quite rightly, considered it his duty to finish off the wounded one with his second barrel. The son, meanwhile, had secured his brace unchallenged. Upon another occasion I saw a bird rise immediately between them, at which both fired simultaneously. The effect from an onlooker's point of view was curious. A distinct puff of feathers flew from each side of the bird, and no man living could have declared either shot to have been the conclusive one. Upon paper it is easy enough to talk of mutual arrangements by which no man spoils another's shot. In practice the matter is not so simple, and the bird would skim out of range as often as not while everyone was deciding the weighty question as to who should or should not fire.

In the ordinary course of events it is exceptional to see more than one bird fall to a shot. One reads a great deal about the unsportsmanlike practice of 'browning' instead of selecting an outside bird. A reprehensible practice, certainly, also eminently foolish, but a proceeding more innocent of its supposed cruelty could scarcely be imagined. The perpetrator of such an outrage wounds, we are told, as many birds as he kills. It may be so, but since one rarely kills a single bird by such methods the toll of wounded can scarcely be great. Most of us have tried it, surreptitiously, at some stage of our career—it is the last and almost inevitable resource of disillusioned and humiliated youth, adopted

and speedily abandoned upon discovering that one's analysis suffers rather than benefits. The whole idea, indeed, is so inconsistent with fact that one cannot but wonder how it originated. Partridges do not burst up in clouds, like starlings from a crowded tree-top, or wood-pigeons from a field of vetches. Upon an average ten or a dozen birds, they disperse as they rise, and have usually spread themselves along a front of from fifteen to twenty yards by the time a gun is levelled at them. Far from a random shot into their midst inevitably killing one or more and wounding others, the odds are long against a single bird losing a feather, and to anybody inclined to think otherwise one can only say—try it. True, it occasionally happens that two birds are in line, in which case both will fall. Again with a driven covey, topping a fence broadside on, a couple of barrels may prove destructive, and I have known—if confessions of the kind are to be relied upon—considerable havoc wrought amongst a number of birds in the act of rising. I know of a farmer who boasts of eleven with a single cartridge, achieved by firing round a corn-rick at partridges when feeding. There are people who actually try to establish records of the kind. Few will envy them the glory so obtained.

The wilder the birds, the more closely they seem to lie when scattered or driven to cover. Only a few days ago, I saw a single partridge—one of a peculiarly elusive covey—defy the efforts of six men and four dogs by the simple expedient of squatting like a stone upon the precise spot where it had alighted. The covey, circumvented at last and demoralised by a veritable volley of shots, had scattered in every direction, and this bird, marked down by my wife in a field of dry grass, had been accounted easy game. Six men in search of one scared little partridge strikes one, perhaps, as a somewhat one-sided game. The competition proved equal enough, however, with odds—if any—on the partridge, which declined to rise or to give the dogs the slightest indication as to its whereabouts. Only my wife's confident assurance that the bird was there kept us on the search. It was clearly 'up to us' to find it, and under the impression that it must have run some of us tried the hedgerows while others continued to tread the grass. The bird was not forthcoming, however, and not until the lady in question herself joined the search, by walking to the identical spot where it should have been, was the problem solved. Then, one of the spaniels was seen to pounce at something almost under its feet, and with a chirp of protest up whirled the partridge.

I have noticed that the wildest partridges are frequently approached with comparative ease by the farmer upon whose land they have been reared. One almost wonders whether from continually seeing him about the fields they come to regard him as a familiar figure, an animated feature of the landscape, proved harmless so often that they have lost their fear of him. This seems at least possible when one remembers that partridges, like rooks or wood-pigeons, will alight in the same field with men at work, in which connection a neighbouring farmer's son recently told me a curious thing. He was ploughing a wheat stubble when a covey swept past within no great distance of his team, alighting on the headland for which he was making. As he had set some rabbit-traps along the bank, he watched the birds a trifle anxiously, and, sure enough, the chirruping and fluttering of one of them, followed by the hurried exit of the others, announced that the inevitable had happened. The man finished his furrow, then went to release the captive, which continued to flutter and struggle to such purpose that before he reached the spot it had wrenched itself free, and was following in the course of its fellows, leaving a leg in the trap. One seldom bags a one-legged partridge, yet with pheasants it is an only too common occurrence, which rather suggests that the smaller bird rarely survives the experience.

DOUGLAS GORDON.

SHOCK.

BY F. H. DORSET.

It was undoubtedly, as James Ardent had just remarked, a filthy night for travelling, especially for travelling North. The air was bleak, and a smell of unshed snow penetrated like fog from the outer darkness into the illuminated and heated interior of the first-class railway compartment in which James and his wife were making their journey.

Neither closed windows nor steam-heating availed to rid the atmosphere of that subtle all-pervading chill. James, settling down amid travelling-rugs, grunted and groaned condemnation, and his wife, already settled in the opposite corner-seat, watched him with bright quizzical eyes. James, dear soul, was sometimes very quaint to watch.

'The infernal beastliness of a journey like this,' said James, 'is that it isn't long enough to make a "sleeper" worth while and yet it's just long enough to eat up the best part of a night. Let's see. Leeds at twelve-thirty; then that ghastly drive out to Check-wold, twenty miles because no night-trains stop at the Halt. B-r-r!'

Rose Ardent stirred and smiled. She was a big woman, no longer young, and she had learnt the philosophy of comfort; in other words, had early discovered how to shake and shape a situation out of needless angularity. Experience had taught her that it was no use trying to arrange James comfortably. He preferred to fuss and fidget himself out before really subsiding into ease; for which reason Rose had wasted no time over tucking her own wraps about her, and was prepared to enjoy the mild comedy of her husband's dissatisfactions.

'Anyhow,' she remarked, running a white hand over her sleek head and pushing a cushion further into the angle of the seat, 'let's thank Heaven that these are automobile days, and we shan't have to drive twenty miles behind horses, as we did when we came to visit your mother after our honeymoon. . . .' She regarded him a thought wistfully. 'It's queer,' she added, 'to think that

we've been married twenty years to-day—and having to scuttle off like this to Checkwold without warning. It's years and years since we went there together, Jim.'

James Ardent assented worriedly.

'I don't understand my mother's wire at all, Rose,' he said, and, drawing a hastily crumpled telegram from his breast-pocket, he studied it with frowning attention as though trying to extract from it the full significance which it concealed.

Like all letters and pronouncements of Mrs. Ardent senior, the telegram which had reached the James Ardents something less than two hours ago sounded a note imperious and autocratic. It was not a message to ignore or dispute, and the James Ardents had responded to it with haste. There had been the flurried packing of suit-cases, a scampering ride in a taxi, the breathless catching of a train, and here they were, travelling North in response to the emphatic summons conveyed to them by that flimsy scrap of pinkish paper.

'Both come immediately car meets twelve midnight Leeds not ill urgent,' read James. 'If she isn't ill, what in the name of fortune can have happened?'

Rose shook her head, but her faint smile died on her lips. In her heart of hearts she knew that it would have given her great satisfaction to learn that the elder Mrs. Ardent was dangerously ill or dying. Rose was not addicted to hatred. Generally speaking, she liked humanity and found it amusing, but sombrely and in secret she hated her mother-in-law; not because she was imperious or cutting—they had seen too little of each other during Rose's married life for that to hurt—but because James' mother all his life long had been unkind to James. James' childhood had been spent in the cold shadow of a hard woman; his shrinking nervous boyhood, handicapped by the shortened leg which had been his from birth, had been exposed raw and uncomforted by mother-love to the youthful savagery of his fellows at a second-rate Yorkshire school when Mrs. Ardent's purse could well have afforded to have sent him to a Public School of more chivalrous tradition. His education had been shockingly scamped, his love of music uncultivated. James Ardent to-day was merely head clerk in the London office of Rhinegold and Son because the inbred nervousness of his youth had developed in him the condition which Rose of late had learnt to label with the words 'inferiority complex,' and because Mrs. Ardent, possessor of three thousand a year

and Checkwold, had economised over his education. And yet James' mother had behaved with surprising generosity about his marriage. James and Rose had, twenty years ago, been fully prepared to wed on James' three hundred a year—which comprised his then salary and the fifty p.a. inherited from a father who had preferred to die in Italy far away from his wife—and James' expectations. Rose possessed one hundred a year of her own, and in nineteen hundred and eight four hundred a year was a possible starting-point for simple middle-class matrimony. Mrs. Ardent, then abroad, had returned to England, inspected Rose, cross-examined her to an extent hardly to be borne, and pronounced her benediction on the match. And ever since then she had given James an allowance which more than doubled their income. She had not given graciously ; indeed she seemed to regard her gift as a rein securing James to the chariot of her will. Rose would have preferred independence and four hundred a year, but James' health was uncertain and there was the possibility of a family to be considered. The family did not transpire, but later, when, after they had passed through seven years of marriage, the European War knocked the bottom out of investments, they had reason to be thankful for Mrs. Ardent's ungracious assistance, even though James became head clerk in the Firm. He would never be a partner—Rhinegold and Son required more 'pep' and rather less conscience in a partner—but he made a reliable head clerk and they did not grudge him his eight pounds a week. The Firm, triumphantly British-born whatever its first extraction, stuck to its name and its head clerk throughout all the turmoil and alarums of war ; indeed, its business increased, and even the trade depression of the War's aftermath affected it but little. James' salary, however, seemed to have reached its sticking-point. Still, he was an only child, and Mrs. Ardent senior was seventy odd and a confirmed invalid. One day James would have nearly three thousand a year and Checkwold ; so, financially, they had no anxiety.

Even in the first days of their courtship and marriage Rose had sometimes struggled to analyse her reasons for loving the nervous and oft-times unhandy James. She had never intended to love anyone like him, and she had never believed in sentimental romance. Love, in Rose's instinctive belief, was a robust emotion, tender and passionate perhaps, compassionate of fault or trouble in the beloved, tinged with strong maternal instinct, but emphatically not the child of pity. One did not love a man because one was sorry for

him and wished to protect him from pain. You loved children that way, and perhaps the childishness of men, but not men. Therefore, although a burning pity and indignation for James had constantly possessed her, ever since the fatal morning when, knowing him but slightly, she had seen him wince beneath a drop of conversational vitriol from a more eligible suitor, it was not pity or tolerance which had kept alight the fire of her devotion for twenty years. And truly dear Jim, when all was said and done, hadn't contributed so very much fuel towards it. He had been affectionate, often demonstrative, grateful for her kindness, and . . . self-centred from the first, displaying a nature so driven in upon itself during a warped youth that not even middle age could free him from the habit. She had constantly found him crass, uncomprehending, uninterested in her own mentality, easily upset by pin-pricks in business or social life; a difficult fussy man. Rose had never admired the rôle of Patient Griselda, and yet—allowing for a few healthful flarings-up—she had, during all these years, sat in spirit at the door of her husband's soul waiting for revelation of an angel within.

Somewhere within this apparently trivial man was some kind of dormant greatness. She believed in it still, albeit a little grimly and satirically, and she knew, now, that that was why the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them could not have dragged her away from him. It was just a trifle comic, this situation between them after twenty years of the petty disillusionments of married life. Jim was looking so funny at that very moment—so nearly absurd that her heart ached over him. His slightly grizzled dark hair was untidy and his tie had slipped and revealed his collar-stud. Although tall, he had a long body, short legs—one even shorter than the other, just enough to induce a slight limp—and his shoulders sloped too much for a man. Clothes always seemed to get a bit crooked on Jim. He liked them loose and seemed to twist inside them until he had found comfort by getting every garment slightly out of alignment. You couldn't keep him really tidy, and he snarled horribly if you tried to.

He had settled down in his seat at last, thank goodness, but he was still speculating over Mrs. Ardent's telegram. Rose did not pay much attention to what he was saying. She was considering the man himself too intently, trying to assume enough detachment to appraise him, and marriage with him, at something like an accurate valuation. Jim, of course, didn't love her yet as she

loved him. He thought he did, but he didn't, never had. True, he did not display all his goods in the window, and in love as in all else there should always be reserves of force to supply a sense of depth and background to the daily exchange of affection. But Jim seemed to lock up too much in reserve. She knew, after all, so little of his inmost aspirations and nothing of his day-dreams. He loved music, and Rose was not musical. She suspected that he confided to his piano and violin much that he never told her. And until Jim learnt to speak to her in a spiritual tongue she knew that she herself could never speak to him of her own spiritualities; their traffic would still be confined to the outer and obvious affairs of life. Twenty years had gone by. Wasn't she rather a fool still to hope—no, even to expect—any change in the situation? A shock, some kind of mental earthquake—perhaps that would shake open Jim's closed doors. So far nothing big or shocking had happened to them. The War had been national and largely impersonal. No one very near or dear to either of them had served at the Front, and Jim's health and leg had precluded Service even as a Special Constable. He had played at countless concerts for the entertainment of soldiers and sailors and for war charities, and he had gone conscientiously about his daily business. Rose had worked in canteens and struggled with war rations. Before the Armistice had arrived these things had become commonplaces and sources of irritability; and the social confusion and hysteria induced by peace, the strikes and labour troubles, had again been public matters, affecting Jim and Rose only as good citizens and not as individuals.

Would anything ever happen, any big personal thing, to shake down this flimsy impenetrable barrier still standing between them? Sometimes, Rose recognised, she was actively bored by the external and trivial James, and yet her faith in a great and interesting though still unexplored James remained with her, intact, illogical. She wondered if many marriages were like this, whether Death would one day find them still inarticulate. And here, because Rose had no intention of becoming morbid, she jerked her attention back from speculation to Jim's agitated commentary about the telegram.

'I can't understand it *at all*!' he was repeating.

'Why try to?' asked Rose philosophically, with that outward indolence so at variance with her inward alertness. 'She's always treated you as a child to be ordered about and not supplied

with reasons until afterwards, when you've done whatever she wants. This is almost the first time in ten years that she's sent for me too. We'll know all about whatever it is soon enough. Jim, I wish you weren't quite so dutiful towards her. Of course she helps us out financially, but that doesn't make her a good mother. She's always been as hard as a rock to you.'

Jim Ardent fidgeted with the scrap of paper.

'I don't know,' he said, apologetically. 'I think she was a bit unbalanced when I was born, you know; that my father had let her down pretty badly. She's never told me details, but I know he cleared out with someone else to Italy when they'd only been married for six months. She's never liked me, and that's a fact. I don't suppose she can help it.'

Rose was silent. She was often puzzled as to whether Jim's patience towards his mother was due to innate chivalry or fear of losing that extra four hundred a year and prospects. Mrs. Ardent, of course, could actually leave her money and property where she chose. It was all hers in her own right, and English law did not compel her to leave it to her son. So probably diplomacy had something to do with Jim's attitude. That was commonsensible. Why cut off your nose to spite your face? Still, it was a little unheroic.

'Well,' said Rose, 'quite frankly I think your mother's always been a beast. It's a cheap way of revenging yourself on fate to be unkind to a child, any child, especially your own. Let's hope she *has* always been mentally unhinged! It's her only valid excuse!'

This time Jim was silent. When he spoke again it was only, peevishly, to wonder why the steam-heating wasn't hotter. That was another queer thing about Jim. He didn't care for his mother; of his childhood and boyhood he always spoke bitterly; but he never directly attacked her, even when speaking to the wife of his bosom. He always evaded, or found excuse for her. Why? What did it matter what he said to Rose, his partner? Did he think she would ever babble of it to anyone on earth? He ought to know better by now, to realise that her capacity for silence was as great or greater than his own. She was not a talkative woman.

Rose sighed involuntarily. 'Jim,' she said, changing the subject, 'shove my suit-case under my feet, there's a dear. It keeps them out of a draught.'

Then she relapsed into silence and a simulated doze while Jim

readjusted himself in his corner, grunted, hunted for his glasses, found them, mislaid his evening paper and rediscovered it—he had sat on it, and so perforce had to rise and readjust himself all over again. Then his collar irked him, and he loosened it and put the stud in his breast-pocket with the telegram until such time as they drew near Leeds, for they had the compartment to themselves. Rose stirred and held out a hand.

‘You’d better give me that stud,’ she ordained, ‘or you’ll pull it out in a hurry and drop it when we get there. What an old fussbox you are, Restless Jim!’

‘I’m worried,’ said Jim, meekly handing her the small article in question. ‘*I don’t understand that telegram, Rose!*’

‘Oh, bless us!’ said Rose, ‘are you going to worry about that all night? *I’m* going to take a nap.’

She closed her eyes, but her ears remained diligent to every sound and movement of her life-partner. He fidgeted like a man possessed, but she knew that if she asked him why that futile telegram had upset him so much he would not tell her. Probably it only meant something wrong with the old lady’s investments. She made use of Jim for that sort of thing, business dealings, although she was as mum as an oyster about her actual personal expenditure. Perhaps she had lost money, been speculating. Yet that seemed to be unlikely. She always consulted Jim about investments, and she never did anything risky. Jim wasn’t a bit like her, except that he was cautious and a little unenterprising in business. Apart from that he resembled her not at all. He was not sandy but dark of skin and hair and eyes—like his father, Rose assumed; and he was not calm and cold, in spite of his inward stubborn reserve, and he was kind; hated to see pain, inclined always to side with the under-dog. He shrank from life’s savagery, was intensely civilized, and with all his untidiness prized order and comfort and a particular kind of shaving-soap. Mrs. Ardent was austere and even primitive in her tastes; an invalid unwillingly bereft at seventy of ice-cold baths and other grim hardships. It was quite possible to visualise her as a kind of refined savage, not at all averse to shedding blood, or a prehistoric advocate of woman’s right to handle a stone hatchet. Hers, mused Rose behind closed eyelids, was quite the temperament to nurse hatred of her unfaithful husband even after his death—and he had died when Jim was a baby of three—and to wage a kind of vindictive vendetta against her husband’s son, even though he came of her own body,

satisfying a desire for revenge by keeping him always in a dependent position ; at first by equipping him ill for the battle of life and then—the thought came to Rose like a stinging revelation—by encouraging him to marry young and marry a woman with little money of her own. That had meant the additional hold of the allowance-maker for Mrs. Ardent. Rose marvelled that she had not understood this fact fully before. She had realised long ago that Mrs. Ardent enjoyed her son's slavery and rather despised him for it, but she had somehow never before grasped that fact as the reason for Mrs. Ardent's approval of herself for her son's wife. The old lady, too, had shown chagrin at the non-appearance of grandchildren, children whom Rose—shrinking under her mother-in-law's thinly veiled accusations—had desired fervently herself. Children . . . they would have supplied the last strand of financial slavery for Jim ! Rose flushed hotly, and her closed eyelids quivered. The old beast ! And they were going to see her, and she, Rose, would have to be polite to her for Jim's sake ! If only the old wretch would die ! But people like Jim's mother never died.

By the time they had reached Leeds Jim had just settled himself into a light slumber and Rose was wide awake and seeing the psychology of old Mrs. Ardent in a white light of cold hatred. Almost she appeared as an ogress from whose clutches the hapless Jim ought to be snatched at the earliest possible moment.

The car, accompanied by a patient chauffeur, awaited them. In reply to Jim's questioning the chauffeur had no information to impart. Mrs. Ardent was in her usual health. He had merely been told to meet the twelve-thirty at Leeds to bring Mr. and Mrs. James out to Checkwold, and he had dutifully done so.

'Anyhow, she's not ill, Rose,' remarked Jim, as the door of the car slammed upon them.

'No,' said Rose shortly, and refrained from saying that the telegram had told them as much.

The night was still full of unshed snow. Something frozen and forbidding in the atmosphere seemed to hold back the flakes from falling with an icy hand, yet sounds went dead upon the air before travelling any distance, and the country, when the car emerged from the town, seemed to be muffled. Jim's restlessness quietened a little. They sat close together under the thick fur rug and Rose felt that he was tense, a bundle of nerves. She wanted badly to make him relax, to attempt soothment by motherly words and

pattings, but experience had taught her that, at such moments, one might as well attempt to pet a galvanic battery. So she contented herself with pressing unobtrusively against his side and saying nothing.

The gates of Checkwold appeared to jump at them out of the thick darkness, and then to engulf them in a sombre tunnel of shrubbery before the drive swerved out of a plantation to run through a bit of smooth park-land to the house. The house itself was massive, an unimaginative pile of stone built a century ago. On the terrace behind it, Rose remembered, were six stone urns set at intervals along a stone balustrade, and she had once incurred a cold glance from Mrs. Ardent by saying flippantly that they ought to contain potted Ancestors. At the moment she had genuinely forgotten that Checkwold had been built by Mrs. Ardent's father and that he had had no ancestors to speak of. Even Jim hadn't liked that joke very much.

Mrs. Ardent's butler admitted them. Mrs. Ardent's maid came forward to inform them that Mrs. Ardent at that moment slept, but wished to see them in the south sitting-room after eight-o'clock breakfast next day. On that, soup, sandwiches, and whisky and water, the junior Ardents retired to bed, fully aware that eight-o'clock breakfast at Checkwold meant eight o'clock, and that Mrs. Ardent, having breakfasted alone in her room even earlier, would be ready for them in her usual day's quarters by half-past eight.

Jim, who was suddenly quiescent and exhausted after his prolonged fidget, slept, but Rose lay long awake, one hand clenched remorselessly against her breast, raging against her own helplessness. For if, by word or storm, she at last reft James from his mother, she would land him, shorn and disinherited, in a world which appraised him at eight pounds odd a week. Wherefore she had no outlet for this new tumult of her spirit. If only twenty years ago she had rebelled, insisting on independence and poverty! Perhaps then Jim might have found his full manhood, learnt not to shrink, to climb . . . to be a little hard as a man should be! Perhaps then, in the struggle, he would have forgotten to lock the door of this temple within so close. It was too late now, but Rose, stretched recumbent in the unfamiliar bed, felt herself possessed by anger and yielded without demur. Coldly, deliberately, concentrating her will, she wished her mother-in-law dead.

Mrs. Ardent senior was, however, very much alive at eighty-three on the following morning.

The day was dark and young. Snow was really falling now and it was not a morning to entice an old lady, a semi-invalid to boot, out of bed ; but there she was, by the fire in the south sitting-room, fully clothed and in complete possession of her faculties. She did not even appear to feel the cold, and Rose, who had dressed wearily in an all but unwarmed bedroom, found herself physically and mentally at a disadvantage. Jim, too, did not seem to be at all up to the mark.

Old Mrs. Ardent did not look her age. Clothed thickly in tweed, her sandy grey hair neatly dressed and her broad-cheeked face not too deeply lined and considerably weather-beaten, she suggested by her personal appearance that she was about to step out for a long walk across the moors. The crutch leaning against her chair seemed incongruous ; but for the last three years, thanks to a fractured thigh acquired by a slip on the terrace of the six stone urns, she had been considerably lamer than James. Her accident had induced a degree of ill-health in a frame hitherto hardy as a gorse-bush. It had made her irritable on a large scale, for mere peevishness had never consorted with her active mind.

'Well!' she said, smiling and giving a handshake but no embrace to her son and daughter-in-law, 'so you came last night, like dutiful children, when I sent for you. Thank you!'

Her thanks sounded a shade ironical, and Rose flushed. Jim cleared his throat nervously.

'Well, Mother!' he retorted with would-be geniality, 'I'm glad you're not ill, but what's the trouble? Your telegram worried me a bit.'

'Did it?' The old lady's gaze rested upon him speculatively. 'Yes . . . I thought it would. It doesn't take much to make you worried, you're the worrying sort. I thought it would do you good to be rattled up a bit on your twentieth wedding day, and that it was about time I told you and Rose a few business facts that will affect your future. I've been going into my affairs. It occurred to me rather forcibly yesterday that "in the midst of life we are in death" and that I might suddenly have a stroke and be unable to explain things to you which I have always determined some day to explain personally. And that would have deprived me of a great pleasure. . . . Rose, you look very blooming! How long is it since I saw you?'

'Four years, Mrs. Ardent, when you were in Town before your accident. You wouldn't let me come with Jim when you were so ill.' Rose had never addressed her mother-in-law by any save her formal title.

'No, of course I wouldn't. What could you have done except be in the way? Now don't look offended, my dear woman! Tell me, did you think I'd want anyone to hold my hand? And what else could you have done? Jim was useful for business purposes; the rest of my household understands its routine, and my housekeeper needed no outside direction. Wimbledon is your natural sphere, not Checkwold.'

'Quite,' assented Rose acidly; 'then why have you sent for me too, now?'

'Because, my dear,' said Mrs. Ardent, with that ironical inflexion on the epithet, 'what I wish to tell you affects you both. I've been saving it up, a surprise for you, ever since your wedding-day. If you'd had children, like sensible human beings, perhaps my surprise might have been a bit modified—if they had shown themselves to be promising youngsters. As things are I've decided to alter nothing. Recognising which side your bread was buttered you have, of course, been dutiful to me. It is only right that your particular sense of duty should be suitably rewarded. That is why I sent for you.'

The younger Ardents looked at the old lady somewhat blankly. Then Rose glanced at her husband, seated on her right in one of the solid saddle-bag chairs of Mrs. Ardent's peculiarly Victorian and mannish favourite apartment. He and Rose and his mother formed the points of a rough triangle, and beside Mrs. Ardent a workman-like baize-topped writing-table stood, covered with piles of neatly filed papers. Rose saw that her husband's somewhat dusky face had whitened, but she could not read his expression. It was, if anything, still blank; he might be suffering either from relief or anticipation; but it struck her now, as often before, that his father must have possessed a strain of either Italian or Spanish blood in his veins. Jim's eyes were intensely dark and bright, and his hair, before it became grizzled, had been almost coal black. It stood up untidily at this moment, because he had just rubbed it up the wrong way. He did not speak, but waited for the arbitress of his fate to continue. She turned her chair a little closer to the table, and separated from the rest a packet of letters in worn envelopes of cheap paper.

'Those,' she said, setting then aside, 'you can read presently, at your leisure. They were written to me by your father, and corroborate every word which I am about to tell you. He was a feckless hopeless creature with a gift of the gab and no guts. You, James, are more reliable, but you're weak-kneed. You've ambled along always without enterprise and with your head full of tosh. The only difference between you is that you've never asked me for things since your boyhood, though you've taken what I gave readily enough; whereas your father did nothing but ask. Seemed to think that I ought to support him and his foreign mistress because I had once been fool enough to love him. Well, I didn't, naturally. I divorced him—which he didn't want, because it meant that the milch cow had run dry. However, James, for forty-five years I have provided money and education and a business post for his illegitimate son. I think that it is time that you and Rose learnt of the fellow's existence. He had no claim upon me at all; has no legal claim to-day. He receives nothing under my Will. He is not my son but your father's, and he is now earning enough to support himself unpretentiously. Tell me, James and Rose. Do you think that I need do anything more for him?'

Jim was looking at Mrs. Ardent narrowly.

'An illegitimate son . . . poor devil!' he said slowly, 'and you've helped him all these years, given him his start. Pretty rough on you, Mother; awfully good of you. Why did you do it?'

'Possibly,' said Mrs. Ardent, 'for revenge. Why not?'

'*Revenge?* Why—how—D'you mean "coals of fire," Mother?'

'Bah! "Coals of fire" indeed! No. Something much more satisfactory than that. I'm not sentimental. When I've been injured I like to get something solid under my claws to maul. Lord, you thin-blooded indeterminate forgiving people annoy me! . . . That son of Duncan's is unsatisfactory. If he'd displayed a bit of spunk, not been so perenially sorry for himself and his handicaps, he'd have interested me more. There's been too much grievance about him altogether, and not enough fight. I've never discovered any devil in him; otherwise,' her sparkling blue eyes held Jim's dark ones challengingly, 'I'd have made him my heir.'

'Mother!'

'I used,' continued Mrs. Ardent at a lower pitch, 'to expect him to hit back one day. It didn't seem credible that anyone with

Italian blood in him shouldn't seek revenge for being mauled. Because I *have* mauled him, James! Deliberately, and without receiving satisfaction. He's a tame cat. So now I am going to try what a hot iron will do towards stirring him up. I've raised him to expect great things after my death, compensations for mauling. In fact, he imagines that Checkwold and my exchequer will be his, that he's down to inherit the lot. So he's not going to get one penny, and I'm telling him so now, instead of by a bit of paper when I am not here to see the fun. That is why I sent for you and Rose.'

'Mother!' cried James Ardent again, with sharp protest. Rose, blood drumming in her ears, cried out inarticulately, sensing the old lady's response before it came.

'No!' said Mrs. Ardent triumphantly; 'I'm not your Mother! Never was. And that's what I sent for you both to tell you.'

The cry in Rose's throat choked and fell away. Like a crash of daylight knowledge and understanding seemed to fill her whole being. Even anger and dismay were, for a moment, held back by overwhelming relief. They were free of the shadow of this woman and her money. War was out in the open now, and its motives were no longer confused; and Jim . . . Jim could prove at last what manner of spirit he was of. She looked at him, tense to observe how he took this blow, and for the fraction of a second her heart failed her. He looked stricken. Was he then veritably a 'tame cat'? Had the hot iron no power to stir him into a man's downright anger? For a moment he seemed to shrink and shrivel. . . . But the next instant James was on his feet, looking unexpectedly large. His voice, clear of its habitual querulousness, boomed suddenly with the tone of a bell. 'Thank God!' he said.

'Jim!'

Rose, in spite of herself, was frightened. Her husband glanced at her unseeingly, and drew close to the writing-table beyond which sat the woman whom he had always believed to be his mother. He leant across it, and gripped with an iron grip the large, relentless, woman's hand which lay on the green baize. His own spare dark fingers pinned her white ones remorselessly to the table, his black eyes blazed into her blue, and met a level undaunted response.

'Ah!' said Mrs. Ardent, 'so losing your money *has* power to stir you, James Antonelli Ardent!'

'Money be damned!' said James Ardent thickly. 'What I

said was, Thank God! You're *not* my mother, you bit of incarnate cruelty! I can speak out now, and tell you why, all these years, I've been to you what you are pleased to call "a tame cat." Here's the reason, then! It was because, if I hadn't mastered my hate for you, it would have mastered me, and that would have meant your death. It seems that I'm not half Italian for nothing! Listen now, and I'll tell you about the volcano you've been walking on, and chucking stones into all these years! *Now* I understand what you've been at, checking, thwarting, baffling me always! I meant utterly to have cleared out, leaving you and Checkwold to freeze together twenty odd years ago, but I met Rose. And you saw to it that I should not break away. Then I took your money to augment my income. Why? Because I couldn't resist it? *No, but because it was another handcuff to keep me off . . . murder!* Because I had to chain myself up with some flimsy kind of claim on my gratitude for some flimsy kind of benefit received from you in order to keep control of the hatred I've felt for you. Now you sit still and listen! Don't move, or . . . I've reached the limit. I suppose you took me over from my father just for the pleasure of making me pay for his sins. You told me bogey-tales as a little child, and sent me sweating to bed in a night nursery where no night-light was permitted. You left my leg unattended to, when something might have been done for it, and called me "Dot and Go One" before your friends. You dressed me in reach-me-downs and sent me as a miserable child of eight to a cheap boarding-school. When you'd had me "educated" into a physical and spiritual crock you pushed me, at seventeen, into a job I disliked among a type of youth I shrank from—and you knew what you were doing. Yes! *Keep quiet!* You're going to hear it all now, and Rose too! You ferreted out all my hopes and ambitions and made it your pleasure to thwart them. You couldn't thwart me of Rose, though, so you used her for your own ends, and I accepted your cash, and I'm going to tell you in detail why. Do you remember that evening—just before I left school for the Office, my last holidays. . . . When I begged you to let me study music seriously as a profession, and you jeered? Something happened that evening. You didn't know it, but I had a revolver, and I went down to the end of the yew walk with it, by the big cypress—no, not to commit suicide, but to shoot *you* when you took your usual evening stroll there. I meant to finish you and clear, and if caught to let the world know what

I'd suffered from you before they hanged me. All through my childhood, while I suffered so much, I used to dream of killing you, and invent childish tortures for you to distract my mind from its own terrors; and that childish craving rushed back on me, then, and took possession of me. I wanted nothing in the world just then except to see you lying dead. But Collins, your lawyer, turned up and walked up and down there with you, talking business, so I couldn't do it. I was just not insane enough to take that risk. And that night I had a—*a kind of vision of what Murder really means, and I knew that I had a devil to chain in me.*

'So I made a vow. Because you were my Mother no matter how you treated me I must never raise my hand against you or let my hate ride me. I meant to learn as much as possible for a few years at the Office, become efficient in one kind of job at least, and then clear; go out somewhere in the Dominions and put half the world between us. But before I'd learnt enough of the business to count Rose turned up, and showed me what a woman could be when she was kind and . . . right. I couldn't drag her off on a job-hunt abroad, handicapped as I was; I had to stick to my certainty and "prospects" or I'd no right to ask her to put up with a crock like me. So I stayed near you . . . in the danger zone . . . and took what looked like generosity from you and tried to choke my devil with it. I've tried to forgive, not to judge you, to excuse you, to think kindly . . . if I didn't I knew what would happen! I should see red one day when you were insulting me, and there might be no Collins with you. And now you've let my devil loose again. Just thank God there's Rose here . . .'

His breath seemed to fail him in the fury of his words. Rose's hands, gripping the arms of her chair as she sat petrified, were wet and cold with terror. Mrs. Ardent, pale beneath the sunburn acquired during a life-time of open-air existence, sat square, but did not attempt to move her pinioned fingers. After a fleeting instant of silence she grimaced.

'Heavens!' she said. 'You, with a fine old-fashioned hate in you! I can't believe it genuine; in spite of your long rant! What a pity that Rose's presence must turn a possible reality into a melodrama only! Now . . . shall I say "Unhand me, sir"? My knuckles are rheumatic.'

She whitened with pain as she spoke, and Rose half screamed as she saw her gentle and merciful husband for one second crush yet harder on the swollen joints.

'Ah!' he said, 'cry out . . . *Mother!* You pressed me in a vice . . . when I was little and helpless . . . and now . . .'

'Jim!' shrieked Rose. 'She's an old woman! Jim, do you know what you're doing?'

In a chaos of reversed feeling she remembered that overnight she herself had been ready to kill old Mrs. Ardent, by will if not by deed. Now, horrified at the white lips and slightly swaying figure in the chair beyond the writing-table, she saw, as Jim had seen at seventeen, Murder as it was and her husband in the rôle of murderer. She sprang to her feet, but already James had raised himself upright and released Mrs. Ardent's hand. The old lady drew it painfully from the table and dropped it into her tweed lap. 'Piano-practice has made your hand strong!' she said, faintly.

'I'll ring for your maid,' said James quietly. His voice sounded like that of a man who has run hard and fast. 'We're going, immediately and for good. And kindly understand this. Now that I know you are not my mother I'm free of a weight of duty that's half crushed me. And I'm not afraid of myself, now. I'll have nothing more to do with either you or your money, even should you think fit to change your mind. Freedom's cheap at the price. I wish to God that the nightmare had been lifted like this years before. It's a bit late to find myself.'

'You needn't ring,' replied Mrs. Ardent drily, 'there's an electric push attached to my chair and I have just rung. I might have done so when you began your heroics about choking me or something, but I didn't. You were too interesting just then. But your last little plaint . . . it's a little too like you, James. It spoils your effect. A little note of pathos, neutralising a nice hate; self-pity, you know. Here is my maid. Good-bye.'

It seemed to Rose that she herself had lost all power of speech. Jim held open the door for her as Mrs. Ardent's maid approached her beckoning mistress, and in silence they walked upstairs, Jim limping a little less than usual. In the room which they had shared during the night their suit-cases waited for immediate re-packing.

The bedroom door shut upon them, and speech returned to Rose like showers in Spring.

'Oh, Jim!' she cried. 'My boy, my *poor* darling!'

The 'poor darling' sat down on the bed and regarded her piercingly.

'Well,' he said, 'I didn't consult you, Rose, but the truth had

to come out—under the circumstances. We'll have to shift from the house at Wimbledon. It's rough luck on you. Are you game?'

She subsided inelegantly on the floor at his feet and seized his hand appealingly.

'Game! Jim, haven't you ever realised that I'm game for *anything*! This is the best thing that's happened to us for twenty years. Oh, don't, don't begin to be ordinary again all at once! Keep your door open a minute longer, Jim! You've shut me out always, always! You never let me know what you were hiding in your soul, I've never been able to get *at* you.'

'I was hiding a devil, Rose!'

She laughed.

'A devil and an angel, locked up together, fighting. That's what you were hiding. And I hardly heard a sound of it. And I love a scrap! Oh Jim, you darling, you darling!'

And this time she did not qualify the epithet with 'poor.'

THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD :

AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER.

BY MARY BRADFORD WHITING.

MRS. GARDEN, in her *Life* of her father, the Ettrick Shepherd, which was published some years after his death, regrets that she has not been able to recover any of his letters to his friends and acquaintances. From those which he received, she says that she has made a selection, 'but though his letters to them would have been of more interest,' none are to be found, and all that she has in her possession are the letters which he wrote to her mother—letters of too intimate a character to be made public.

Among the letters that she prints in her Memoir is one from Mr. Samuel Carter Hall, the well-known writer on Art, and curiously enough, the letter from Hogg, to which it is an answer, has recently come to light in a private collection of autographs. The letter runs as follows :

MOUNT BANGER,
March 15, 1828.

DEAR SIR,

I remember nothing of our misunderstanding, though I have puzzled my memory considerably about it. But for one thing, I am certain I have no pique or ill-will at any literary man in the world, but on the contrary rejoice in the success of every one of them. When I can further that without fee or reward I never refuse to do it on a small scale, but the writing for these miscellaneous works is become a kind of business now and I find it one that suits me, who have only a spare day now and then, very well. There is only one consideration which prevents me from sending you something immediately, which is that I am engaged to my two friends and countrymen, Mr. A. Cunningham and Mr. Pringle, to support their *Annals*, and who both pay me with great liberality. On that score I have hitherto withheld my compact to any of the other Editions this year though I have never had so many applications. But I think as the *Amulet* embraces a different sphere of literature, my contribution to it could hardly be detrimental to either of theirs. This is really my opinion, but I will not break

my promise to my two friends without the concurrence of both. If you are in friendly communication with them, ask them, or either of them, for they are as one and the same, and let me know what they say, or tell Alan to mention it as he will likely be writing to me this week or next. I certainly weigh well to the Amulet from the sweet and heavenly spirit manifested throughout, and there is no species of composition I am fonder of than such as have a religious tendency.

I fear I cannot send you anything for your monthly work till I know what it is and see it and know something of its nature and principles; it is impossible to write offhand anything suitable to a work of which one knows nothing. As to the juvenile Forget-me-not, I promise if I do not forget to find Mrs. Hall something in character for it.

I am, dear Sir,

yours most respectfully,

JAMES HOGG.

The *Amulet* was a publication founded by Mr. Hall and edited by him from 1826 to 1837, and the letter from him that Mrs. Garden quotes is evidently an answer to the above letter from Hogg:

2, EAST PLACE, LAMBETH,

April 8.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have felt more gratified than I can tell you at the contents of your letter—it is, however, just the kind, frank and generous communication that I was led to expect from the account I had received of you by those who have known you long and appreciate you highly. I enclose Alan Cunningham's letter and am quite sure that Pringle would have written me one to the same effect. Indeed, both these gentlemen are to write for the Amulet, and I need not say that I do, and will do, all in my power to promote their views. I shall hope, then, dear Sir, to receive a prose note and a poem from you at your earliest convenience. I, of course, sent you the magazine that you might perceive its character, and, as I hope, write for it. I said, I believe, I could only offer you eight guineas a sheet—the present maximum—but in a short time, I have every reason to believe, I shall be able to offer you better terms. The magazine had a circulation of three thousand a year and a half ago—but fell down to fifteen hundred in a few months, in consequence of the sad manner in which it was conducted. It is however now increasing and I trust I shall be enabled to get it up. It is an organ of some influence among religious literary readers and the only one they possess of a higher grade than the

Evangelical or Methodist magazines, and I assure you religious readers are now-a-days the great buyers of books.

very faithfully yours,

S. C. HALL.

Copies of the quaint little *Amulet* still exist and may be seen in the Bodleian and British Museum libraries. The sentimental illustrations and the watered-silk binding appeal as little to the taste of to-day as the long-winded moralisings and the portentous warnings.

‘The especial object of the *Amulet* is to blend religious instruction with literary amusement,’ says the Editor in the preface to the second number, ‘so that every article it contains shall bear, either directly or indirectly, some moral lesson which may impress itself strongly on the mind by means of the pleasing language and interesting form in which it is conveyed; for it is not sufficient that our amusements should be merely harmless, when they may, with so much effect, be made to forward the grand end and aim of our being.’

The new publication seems to have had a good reception; the *Literary Chronicle* says of it:

‘This is an elegant, interesting and instructive annual; an *Amulet* against ennui and an exciter of thoughts on subjects calculated to make the heart wiser and the life better.’

The *Morning Post* was equally appreciative:

‘The peculiar feature of the *Amulet* which excludes everything not having some moral or religious tendency, might seem at first to cramp the editor in his endeavours to combine variety with so admirable an object. But whatever may have been his difficulties in that respect, he has certainly triumphed over them with complete success.’

A poem in the 1828 volume is typical of the contributions which evoked such praise—

What hallowed spell or holy charm
Can keep the pilgrim safe from harm,
Forth on life's journey set;
His talisman in happier hours,
When Pleasure's paths are strewn with flowers,
Nor less when tempest darkly lowers,
His spirit's *Amulet*.

Art may prescribe 'gainst outward ill
 Full many an antidote whose skill
 Entails no trivial debt;
 Yet these alone can ne'er suffice,
 To guard from folly and from vice
 Demands a pearl of richer price,
 A holier Amulet.

Tho' viewless unto mortal eye,
 Its influence is for ever nigh;
 Amid the din and fret
 Of daily life, its still small voice,
 Were but its dictates more our choice,
 Would bid us tremblingly rejoice
 In Hope's true Amulet.

The general conception of Hogg is scarcely that of a man who was 'fonder of no species of composition than such as have a religious tendency,' and though he duly forwarded some contributions for Mrs. Hall's *Forget-me-not*, a letter quoted by Mrs. Garden shows that he did not always succeed in satisfying her.

April 2, 1830.

DEAR SIR,

The Prayer for my 'Juvenile' is all that I can wish and the tale you intended for me is also interesting and powerfully written; but surely, my dear Sir, you would not wish my young readers to credit supernatural appearances? I could not take it upon my conscience to send the little darlings trembling to bed after perusing the very perfection of ghost stories from your pen. I find it singularly perplexing that the first tale you send me was one of seduction; your second (a thing, by the way, of extraordinary spirit and beauty), was a wanderer from fairy-land. Now when all the sparkling, glittering, airy beings, are buried under their own green moss and blue harebells, it would be downright sacrilege to fill the heads of our nurselings with their bygone exploits. Your last is a ghost story! which kept even me awake half the night. It is a destruction for you to write them so well. Pray, pray, write me a simple tale, telling about your own pure and immortal Scottish children; without love, or ghosts, or fairies.—My dear Sir, you must not be angry with my frankness. Indeed, Alan Cunningham told me to deal cordially and tell my opinion honestly to you. I have done so and feel that although you may censure my judgment, you will praise my sincerity. I should be sorry if plain speaking lost me

what I am so anxious to retain—your good esteem. Mr. Hall assures you of his esteem, and I am, dear Sir, with much respect,
 your very obliged,

ANNA MARIA HALL.

That Hogg genuinely desired to edify is shown by two curious productions which no doubt cost him an infinity of pains, though they seem utterly valueless when weighed against *Bonny Kilmeny* or the *Ode to a Skylark*. The first of these—*The Confessions of a Justified Sinner*—is a variant of the old legend of a man selling himself to the Devil; the second is the *Lay Sermons*, a collection of platitudes as dull as they are well-meaning. The sermon to Young Women would certainly stir the emotions of the Modern Girl, but hardly in the way that Hogg intended:

‘The means of improvement in regard to your sex,’ he says, ‘are chiefly reading and conversation. The first gives you knowledge and the latter teaches you how to use it and much circumspection is necessary in both cases. Circulating libraries are ruin for you. Novels by ladies, with the exception only of two at present living, are all composed in a false taste and at the same time convey so little instruction that it would be better for you never to open them.’

The worst characters are often made, he says, to appear the most engaging, and such ‘pernicious representations’ may work untold mischief in a ‘youthful female mind’; miscellaneous reading is a great danger, and young women should allow their taste to be formed ‘by parents, pastors and preceptors.’

The ‘youthful females’ of to-day would pay scant attention to advice such as this; but what would they say to the two warnings with which he concludes his sermon: ‘a modest reticence,’ is, he says, an essential quality of womanhood. ‘You may lay it down as a general rule that it is always time for you to cease speaking when those you wish to please seem no longer disposed to listen to you.’ This warning is distasteful enough; but what about the second! ‘Do not be seen flying about with gentlemen in gigs and carriages, nor walking and giggling in the fields, for such behaviour is lightsome and highly disreputable.’

Grave sermons like these come somewhat oddly from the Shepherd of the *Noctes*—the convivial being who is described in Lockhart’s *Life of Scott* as so free in speech and so uncouth in manner as to be scarcely fit for ladies’ company; but the dual

nature that most people possess was more strongly marked in him than in others, and even those who knew him in his unguarded moments seem to have looked upon him as a valuable coadjutor. Thus Pringle writes in June, 1831 :

DEAR HOGG,

In two days I shall again be in the Press with *Friendship's Offering* and I shall be not a little disappointed if I have nothing from you in it. Last year the plate for which you wrote was not ready and the publishers and literary friend in whose hand I left the volume when I went to Scotland did not think your prose tale quite suitable for the book it seems—its humour, they say, was too broad. So I sent the MS. agreeably to your instructions, to Fraser, where it was printed long ago.—Now, what I want from you this year is not a prose tale, nor a long poem, but three or four short pieces, about a page, or a couple of pages each, such as you have once or twice sent. And if you have not such by you, you will soon screeed them off on the slate if you set about it. And mind, take Mrs. Hogg's counsel as to the subjects and phraseology, for without any disparagement to you, my friend, I opine that she knows better than you what will suit a lady's work-table. Now, dear Hogg, as I hope to have the volume through the Press this month, and as I have a strong presentiment, somehow, that this will be the last Annual I shall edit, I hope you will do your very best for me and help me to come off with flying colours.—I am told that you have been quizzing me with other Annualists in Blackwood this month. I have not yet seen the number, but I do not apprehend anything ill-natured, though I wish that you would not drag me into notoriety, which I am not very fond of. Isn't it enough to have been one of the beasts of the Chaldee manuscript, you sad, mischievous fellow ?'

The last sentence recalls the famous *jeu d'esprit* which set the literary world of Edinburgh by the ears in the year 1817. The story starts with the rivalry between Blackwood and Constable. Constable owned the *Edinburgh Review* and Blackwood resolved on a counterblast in the shape of a monthly magazine ; the two editors were to have been Pringle and Cleghorn, who were introduced to Blackwood by Hogg ; but there was friction from the start and as a result they deserted to the rival firm. Lockwood, Wilson & Hogg, had been secured by Blackwood for the new venture and they cast about for some sensational means of rousing public attention. The idea of putting daring personalities into Scriptural language was then a novel one and the so-called Chaldee manuscript

which appeared in the first number set all tongues wagging. Mrs. Oliphant, in her account of it, says that its readers were 'delighted, amused, offended and furious': but to this list should be added *shocked*, for to the stricter spirits the Biblical phraseology seemed nothing short of blasphemous. By a strange coincidence, Pringle and Cleghorn were both lame and they are described as 'skipping on staves' as they approached the house of the man whose 'name was as it had been the colour of ebony.' To this man—

'They proffered a book, and they said unto him, "Take thou this and give unto us a sum of money that we may eat and drink and our souls may live. And we will put words into the book that will astonish the children of thy people and it shall be a light unto thy feet and a lamp unto thy path; it shall also bring bread unto thy household and a portion unto thy maidens." And the man hearkened unto their voice and he took the Book and gave them a piece of money. But after many days they put no words in the Book and the man was astonished and waxed wroth, and he said unto them, "What is this that ye have done unto me and how shall I answer those to whom I am engaged?" And they said, "What is that to us? See thou to that."'

Constable is described under his nickname of 'Crafty,' and Scott as the 'Magician.' Disturbed at the appearance of the rival publication, whose office was in Princes' Street, Constable exclaims: 'I will arise and go unto a Magician which is of my friends; of a surety he will devise a remedy and free me out of my distress. So he arose and came unto that great Magician which hath his dwelling in that old fastness hard by the river Jordan which is by the Border.'

The Magician's reply is: 'The land is before thee; draw up thy hosts for the battle on the mount of Proclamation and defy boldly thy enemy which hath his camp in the place of Princes; quit ye as men and let favour be shown unto him which is the most valiant.'

The writers did not spare themselves: Lockhart is described as 'the Scorpion, which delighteth to sting the faces of men, that he might sting sorely the countenance of the man that is Crafty, and of the two Beasts' (Pringle and Cleghorn).

The sensation caused by this production was a splendid advertisement for the magazine; the number was soon sold out and the only result of reprinting it without the offending article was to send copies of the first edition round an ever-increasing circle of

borrowers. It was little wonder that Lockhart, Hogg and Wilson should all have claimed to be its author; but in all probability each of the three had a hand in it, with Hogg, perhaps, as the originator. A portrait of Hogg, signed *A. Croquis*, is attached to the letter in the collection mentioned above, and since this has the words printed beneath it *The Author of the Chaldee Manuscript*, Hogg's claim was evidently allowed by the Fraserites.

The portrait is one of the famous set published in *Fraser's Magazine* between 1830 and 1838. The originals are now in the South Kensington Museum (Forster Collection) with other of Maclise's sketches, and a set of reproductions, with Maginn's accompanying notices, was subsequently prepared by Professor Bates of Birmingham and published by Chatto and Windus. The Professor quotes the remarks of the editor of *Fraser*, after the first set of portraits had appeared:

'We commenced a Gallery of Illustrious Literary Characters in the month of July, 1830—commenced, we own, in mere jocularly, and trusting to his well-known good-nature and long-trying good-temper, selected Jerdan as our opening portrait. There was nothing in what we said that could annoy a man for whom we had so sincere a regard, and we found that the idea pleased. We continued it, therefore, until we had published no less than eighty-one. It will be a valuable present to the future Granger; even as it is, the collection is in considerable demand for the purpose of illustrating books of contemporary literature, such as the works of Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott, etc.'

Professor Bates states that the drawings were destroyed directly after publication and that no portraits were allowed 'to get abroad, detached from the magazine.' If the drawings in the Forster Collection are really Maclise's originals, the first part of the statement is inaccurate, and since the prints thus enrich one collection of autographs, it is probable that the editor's suggestion of their value to Grangerizers has been frequently acted upon.

The portraits made a great success: Mr. S. C. Hall declared that they were 'admirable as likenesses and capital as specimens of Art'; but the greatest tribute to their skill and force is that mentioned in a letter from Thackeray to G. H. Lewes, which is quoted in Lewes' *Life of Goethe*. Describing a visit to Weimar, Thackeray says:

'Any one of us who had books or maps from England sent

them to him (Goethe) and he examined them eagerly. *Fraser's Magazine* had lately come out and I remember that he was interested in those admirable outline portraits which appeared for awhile in its pages. But there was one, a very ghastly caricature of Mr. Rogers, which, as Madame de Goethe told me, he shut up and put away from him angrily: "They would make me look like that!" he said.'

It was in the description of this portrait that Maginn wrote: 'De mortuis nil nisi bonum. There is Sam Rogers, a mortal likeness, painted to the very death!'

The portraits being to some extent caricatures, it was thought better for the artist to remain anonymous; but after awhile they were signed by Maclise with the pseudonym of *Alfred Croquis*. The first portrait to have this name appended was that of Hogg, published in February, 1832. That the secret was not too strictly kept, is shown by the account of a Fraser dinner, given in the magazine, when Crofton Croker proposed the health of

'a decent fellow, who has the art of making faces in a manner never beaten yet. I do not like mentioning names, for it is dangerous in these cross times; but there he is, Dan—I beg pardon, for I was uncommonly near making a slip of the tongue—there he is, Mr. Alfred Croquis, sitting cheek by jowl with Mr. Barry Cornwall. Here's your health, Dan, my boy! Alf, I mean, only it's the same thing.'

And again, when the portraits were to be discontinued, the editor writes with warm praise of the artist's powers:

'Yet, so great is his modesty, that the name of Alfred Croquis never once appears in the catalogues of the Exhibitions. The name of a friend of his, or at least of one who ought to be so, is to be found there pretty often, and we believe that his pictures are not to be sneezed at, even by the most Gothic of Barbarians. He is rising year by year to higher honour and renown and displaying fresh proofs of unwearied genius: and though the pictures he exhibits are of far greater splendour and loftier aspiration, yet in their own way we insist that the sketches of Croquis display as much talent as those of the best R.A. or A.R.A. of the lot, ay, even if you named Daniel Maclise himself.'

The descriptive notices remained unsigned to the end; but it was common knowledge among the literary and artistic circles of the day that they were the work of Maginn. Of Hogg he wrote:

Clear ye your pipes, ye Muses, and sing of the Shepherd of Ettrick—

Hogg, from the mountain of Banger, invading the city of London! Opposite, see, he stands, wrapt round in a pastoral mantle, Covering his shoulders broad. His hand is graced with the bonnet Such as the shepherds wear in the lowland country of Scotland. Comelily curled is his nose; his eye has a pleasantish twinkle; Open his honest mouth whence flowed such rivers of verses, (Whither, we need not say, flowed in such gallons of toddy,) So does he look in the morn, ere yet the goblet or tumbler Pours forth its copious stores and puts a cock in his eyelid. Hail to thee, honest bard! the bard of Bonny Kilmeny! Author of Hogg on Sheep; in fifty magazines writer, Song-maker sans compare, who sang of Magillivray Donald.

He goes on to say that it is not necessary to write Hogg's life, as it has been written so often, by the bard himself as well as by others, that it would only be to repeat a twenty-times-told tale; but as he bids him farewell he wishes him all success in his future:

Adieu, kind Shepherd, sixty years have passed
Since through the world you first began to jog,
Five dozen winters more we hope you'll last,
The pastoral patriarch of the tribe of Hogg.

That the Ettrick Shepherd, in his character of preacher of morals to young ladies and contributor to such unimpeachable productions as the *Amulet* and *Forget-me-not*, can have altogether appreciated these hits at his love for whisky toddy and his naïve delight in his own achievements, can hardly be supposed. But the author, or part-author, of the *Chaldee Manuscript*, was not in a position to complain, and had he done so, Maginn might well have replied with the words put into the mouths of the two Beasts in answer to the complaints of 'Ebony'—'What is that to us? See thou to that!'

THE LAST VOYAGE OF ODYSSEUS.

BY THE RIGHT HON. L. S. AMERY, M.P.

THE first two or three years after Odysseus's return were a halcyon time in Ithaca. For Odysseus himself the days passed almost as in a trance. After twenty years of war and wandering to live settled in his own home, to see Penelope's sweet grave face at all hours, to busy himself with improvements to the Palace and to the farms, to discuss these homely matters as well as greater affairs of statecraft with Telemachus—these things filled him with a deep peace of mind beyond all he had ever dreamt of. Outside there was the boundless admiration of his people, only now beginning to realise the dominant part he had played in the Great War, and the amazing courage and endurance, helped by divine favour, that had brought him home, and proud beyond words that their little island had produced so great a man. From the other rulers of Greece there came letters of congratulation and welcome, followed presently by an invitation to preside over a pan-Achæan conference at Corinth convened to settle many questions left outstanding since the War—disputed successions and internal disturbances in some of the states, debts still due as between them for ships and armaments, unpaid indemnities from some of Troy's Thracian and Asiatic allies who had hastened to make terms after the fall of their leader, Trojan petitions to be relieved of the burden of maintaining an Achæan garrison in the Troad and to be allowed to rebuild subject to the strict disarmament of the Straits zone. He returned with an even enhanced reputation to the greatest triumphal reception Ithaca had ever known, and the cheering crowds, well fed after a series of good harvests, were only too ready to believe that all their blessings derived from a ruler who was, indeed, the wonder of his age.

Then came days of discomfort and disappointment. The death of old Laertes revealed a serious difference of opinion with Telemachus, to whom the estate was handed over, and who began grubbing out the orchards to make room for an expensive and very speculative stud farm for chariot horses. Odysseus himself overspent heavily on an ambitious enlargement of the Palace, not

realising sufficiently the increased cost of building since the War, and Penelope's constant remonstrances about the extravagance of it all, and the unpopularity it would create, were acidulated by resentment at the idea that the plans were borrowed from the palaces of goddesses and witches her husband had lived with. As a respectable, god-fearing queen, she burst out one day, she would not sleep in a bedroom modelled on Circe's; for all she knew he would propose to turn into a wild boar or a panther before coming to bed! More serious, the crops failed year after year. Times began to be hard for everyone, and the customary dues were quite insufficient to keep up the King's new scale of expenditure. The obvious thing was to summon an assembly and ask for increased 'benevolences.' In vain Telemachus warned his father that the public temper had changed greatly since pre-war days. Twenty years without a king had led to very free and easy speech and behaviour at assemblies, and the wiping out of the suitors had removed the young nobility who would naturally form the nucleus of the party of authority. The assembly was a fiasco. Odysseus's proposals for raising fresh revenue were met by open murmurings and audible ejaculations of 'Why not economise, as we have to?' 'Deal with unemployment first.' It seemed wiser not to force a vote, but to play for time.

Unfortunately postponement only enabled the opposition to organise itself. Led by some of the relatives of the slaughtered suitors, they got in touch with the leaders of revolutionary movements on the mainland. Presently there slipped into the island a professional organiser and agitator called Demophylax, 'the People's Guardian,' who, it was reputed, had already turned things upside down in several states, and certainly did so in Ithaca. Beginning quietly at taverns and with small groups of men at the docks or at street corners, he was soon openly haranguing in the market-place, upsetting all the people's ideas in speeches marked by biting invective and coarse mother wit.

'Glories of Troy'—he could tell them something of the cold and hunger, of the agonies of the wounded, of the all-pervading stench of dead men and latrines, of crawling lice and impudent corpse-fed rats in the trenches, of all the things that war spelled to the sons of the people—their sons. As for leadership, who but a crowd of these god-descended Kinglets would ever have taken ten years to capture a one-horse place defended by Asiatics? Odysseus was wonderful, of course; he spoke with all respect of

Ithaca's Great King. Still it was a pity he didn't think of the wooden horse a few years earlier. And meanwhile if only he could have given to sanitation a little of the time devoted to speech-making, he might have saved some of the thousands of fine lads who had died of pestilence. As for the rest, the commander-in-chief had nearly wrecked the whole war because he must have the best girl of a better man than himself. And what was it all about anyway? A whore who couldn't stay with her husband, and a fool of a husband who wanted her back again. And always the people suffered for the follies of their rulers, as they were suffering now. There would be no homes fit for heroes till the people took things into their own hands and looked after themselves.

By the time the adjourned assembly met again Ithaca was completely out of hand. From the first sentence almost Odysseus was subjected to constant interruptions. At last, irritated out of his usual caution, he asked who was prepared to make alternative proposals. There were shouts of 'Demophylax! Demophylax! The Workers' Friend!' 'Let him come forward,' said the King, contemptuously. A moment later his eyes almost started from his head, as a mean, deformed creature limped up, and clumsily mounted the platform at his side. Bandy-legged, with hunched-up shoulders, a bald conical head, large loose mouth, receding chin, and fanatical eyes—there could be no mistaking the seditionist, defeatist, pro-Trojan mischief-maker of old days on the Scamander lines. 'Thersites!' cried the King and raised his sceptre to strike. 'Yes, Thersites,' he replied, stepping back, 'but a free man under the laws of Ithaca, and not a poor soldier, to be cudgelled by an insolent brass helmet for daring to speak the truth.' 'Seize him,' Odysseus roared to his attendants, 'have him flogged, hanged, drawn and given to the dogs to eat!' But before the half-hearted move to arrest him was made, a dozen sturdy ruffians armed with cudgels leapt up and hustled Thersites off the platform back into the crowd, which made off with him in triumphal procession, leaving authority in possession of an empty market-place and with no business transacted.

That night Odysseus consulted long and late with his wife and son in the Palace. The furious rage of the first few hours had, on a careful weighing of resources, given way to craftier counsels. 'There is only one way now, Telemachus, if we cannot hang the fellow, and that is to give him rope to hang himself. We must conclude peace with him, make him our chief councillor, and trust

to his folly and vanity to do the rest. But for that I must be out of the way. I have for some time been thinking I should like to revisit Troy, on business arising out of the Corinth Conference. As soon as I am gone you can announce the change of policy: knock off the building here and open parleys with Thersites. If he is still alive when I come back—and I give you twelve months—I shall believe Penelope played me false in the first year of our marriage, and has simply been covering up her tracks since then.' Mother and son exchanged smiles, in which appreciation of a father's pleasantry was mingled with satisfaction at a solution which removed many difficulties, domestic as well as public.

Pacing the deck, as his well-found craft—the same which had attracted so much attention at the Conference—slipped through the dancing blue waves, Odysseus felt a strange sense of relief. Never had he dreamt that he could rejoice to see the peak of Neriton sink under the skyline. But with it he had left behind a fussy, irritable, ageing local potentate and was Odysseus himself once more. Already the horizon of his intended voyage was opening out. 'I had better give Telemachus a couple of years to deal with the fellow; and even dear Penelope might be a little more reasonable for a gentle reminder of what being husbandless is like, and that without the excitement of a bevy of young suitors.' 'I wonder what seas and rich lands lie beyond that Hellespont which the Trojans always closed to us so jealously.' He breathed a prayer to Athene, and a sea-bird that flew past seemed to convey her approval.

His first anchorage was at Pylos where Nestor welcomed him with all the old-world courtesy and warmth of heart that had always endeared the old man to Odysseus. But after a few days even his affection could not sustain a prolixity which had augmented since the Trojan War, to which was now added a failing memory. There was a long story which Nestor had often told at Troy: when Odysseus heard it three times over at the same banquet he invented an urgent message from Menelaus summoning him to Sparta, and was off next day by chariot, leaving his ship to follow round the coast. Sparta proved an unforgettable experience. Never had Odysseus stayed, even in Phæacia, in a palace comparable for comfort and good taste, as well as splendour, with the new mansion which Menelaus had erected on the banks of the Eurotas with the help of the treasure brought back from Troy and

Egypt. With a pang Odysseus realised that even if he could get the money from his tiresome subjects, or find it beyond the Hellespont, there was one thing neither he nor Penelope could ever supply, and that was Helen's unerring judgment in the matter of decorations. But these reflexions about a shadowy and distant Ithaca scarcely marred his enjoyment of the hours that flew by. What a good comrade Menelaus was : not exactly stimulating perhaps, as a thinker, but a satisfying listener, a shrewd judge of war and politics, of a good wine or a good horse ; what great days they had after the stag or the wild boar in the broad vale of Sparta. Above all, there was Helen : incomparable loveliness of face and form, of mien and motion, combined with an unerring perception of character and a tender, humorous understanding. How just her comments when he and Menelaus recounted their exploits, how illuminating all that she had to tell them of Troy from the inside.

More and more Helen became all in all. To drink in her features, to listen to her golden voice, to think of her—what other object could life have ? Far too late for recovery Odysseus found himself hopelessly, irremediably in love. His whole life from boyhood had been sufficiently filled by his deep and tender devotion to Penelope, a devotion unshaken, unruffled even, by occasional good humoured concession to other women who had loved him. But this was something utterly different, this passion by which his whole being was shaken and transmuted. For once the master of many wiles was helpless, planless. He dared not pray to Athene for counsel, lest the blazing scorn of her grey eyes should shrivel him. Even more he feared Aphrodite's mocking laughter. Night after night of distraction brought one thought only : to tell Helen. What his fate might then be—contempt, exposure and death, or the madness of acceptance—he must leave in her hands.

One day, when Menelaus had gone to inspect one of his estates, he decided to risk all. Helen was seated on a golden arm-chair, spinning. With grave eyes she beckoned him to a stool at her feet, but before he could find words, she began : ' I know what you wish to say. But hear me first. Do you remember that day, at the very opening of the siege of Troy, when you and Menelaus came to ask for my return ? I listened, concealed, from a lattice just above you. Menelaus spoke first : a simple, straightforward, manly speech, filling me with shame for my folly, pity for the noble soul I had wronged, regret for all the trouble I had caused. But I prayed he would fail, for my whole being still clung to Paris.

You rose next. I noticed how short you were compared with Menelaus and how broad. Like a ram, I thought, head down to charge, as you stood there leaning on your staff, waiting as if in search of words, till I asked myself, could this dull, stubborn creature be the eloquent Odysseus? Then, suddenly, you began. Your deep voice, resounding as the sea, thrilled me through and through, while like the whirl of winter snow, the flow of your eloquence seemed to envelop me and shut out all the world except you, your burning passion for justice, your god-like wisdom, your greatness of soul.

'When you ended I knew that nothing was real except you, and that you being beyond me nothing else mattered: Menelaus or Paris, Sparta or Troy, whichever of them should be my fate, they were but shadows. I saved your life once afterwards when you came in to Troy as a spy. I prayed for you in every battle, and above all that night when I knew you were in the wooden horse. — I prayed year after year for your safe return to Penelope. And I have dreamed so often of the impossible, the unimaginable which I now know to be true and yet beyond all hope of fulfilment. For me to betray Menelaus a second time, for you to make a mockery of your life-long devotion to Penelope, these would be things that neither gods nor men, nor we ourselves, could ever forgive. So you must leave, but for all time we shall keep locked in our hearts the happy secret that neither Aphrodite nor Athene shall ever divine.' She gently stroked his chestnut hair, while he knelt and reverently kissed her hand. That night Helen prayed to Aphrodite to increase love and happiness between her and her lord Menelaus, and Odysseus called upon Athene, if ever she had stood by him before, to help him now on his new wayfaring and bring him back successfully to his Penelope.

A few weeks later Odysseus was in the Troad. While his crew and the Achæan garrison competed at games by Achilles's tomb he cleared up with the remnant of the Trojans and their allies the matters which had prevented the resolutions of the Corinth Conference being carried out. But his heart was not in these things, and it was with immense relief that he disposed of them and ran with a favouring breeze up the Hellespont, through the Bosphorus and into the mysterious sea beyond. Following Jason's course he reached Colchis, where he narrowly escaped being held to ransom for the restoration of the Golden Fleece, and putting to sea in a

gale was carried across to the Tauric Chersonese. There he heard much of the Scythians and of the fair-haired Goths who lived beyond them and from whom merchants bought the amber which it was said came from the shores of a far-distant inland sea. To find that sea and return with a great treasure of amber seemed a worthy enterprise. Taking with him a Tauric trader conversant with the language and ways of Scythians and Goths, and learning from him on the way, Odysseus sailed to the mouth of the great river of Scythia, the Borysthenes. Thence for many weeks they rowed against the current until at last the dwindling stream could no longer float his craft. From here the merchant declared that it was a ten days' journey on foot to a river that ran down to the northern sea. Odysseus decided to march across with half his crew and build a smaller vessel on the spot for the further journey. To save the trouble of making oars they carried their own with them.

Marching through marshy ground and dense forest they emerged on the eighth day on a great open plain covered, as far as the eye could see, with stooks of barley and rye and harvesters busily carrying the grain to wagons ready for threshing. In a moment the small party of Ithacans found themselves surrounded by a crowd of fair-haired, bearded giants, the first Goths they had yet encountered. For a while things looked ugly; but Odysseus and the interpreter contrived to make the Goths understand that they had come with friendly purpose and only wished to be taken to someone in authority. They were marched a few miles at the tail of a long line of laden wagons until they came to a great threshing floor where they understood they would find the chief of the tribe. The chief was absent, but his daughter, a tall maiden, powerfully built like a man and with a fierce, free air such as Odysseus had never seen among the women of Achaia, but very comely with long fair hair, asked the ringleader of the mob that escorted the prisoners what their business was. He evidently declared that they were not to be trusted, but the princess, whether disliking the man or pleased with Odysseus's bearing and countenance, dismissed him with a laugh and said: 'They are friends who have come in time to help with our threshing, knowing that we were short of hands.' Turning to Odysseus she asked: 'Are not these winnowing fans that your men are carrying?' And suddenly Odysseus remembered the prophecy which the ghost of Teiresias had once uttered to him in Hades, and knew that he had reached

the goal of his last voyage. 'We have come from a far land at the bidding of a god to help the Goths with anything they may wish to do. But these are not winnowing fans, but the wings of great ships which the god has ordered us to teach you to build, so that you may sail down your great rivers and find treasure from the northern sea.' This he said, knowing from the merchant that the Goths had no ships but only light coracles of wicker covered with hides.

The princess was satisfied with the answer, her curiosity being aroused by the idea of building ships and even more by the personality of the stranger who spoke with such authority and persuasiveness in her own tongue. The chief himself, who arrived soon after, was even more completely satisfied by a presentation of some wonderful Maronian wine—the same as that which once proved so useful with Polyphemus, and of which Odysseus had secured a new supply from Thrace while detained at Troy. As soon as the harvesting was completed the Goths were busy under Odysseus's instructions, and with the help of his men, in building a whole fleet of ships on the river by their principal village. But when Odysseus asked the chief when the fleet should start the latter replied: 'Do you not know that the days are near when our rivers are frozen till next spring? And in any case there can be no haste for you to go, for this morning my daughter has announced that she has decided to take you for her husband, and neither I nor you, even if we would, could thwart her in anything on which she has set her heart.'

So Odysseus wedded the princess, whose name was Ildico, and stayed that winter. And while there he and his men, among whom were many skilled craftsmen, taught the Goths many other things such as the use of iron instead of bronze, and the making of wheels with spokes instead of solid, and the use of letters, which they called *runes*. And Odysseus himself taught them about the gods, fitting his teaching about his own gods to such of the gods of the Goths, like Thor and Freja, as seemed to correspond with them. But of one divinity they had no counterpart, and that was the Goddess of Wisdom, knowing as they did but little of wisdom itself and being content if men fought hard and drank fair and spoke the truth. So Odysseus chiefly devoted himself to teaching them of the power of Athene—hoping, too, thus to win favour of the goddess for his return home—and of the meaning of wisdom.

In the spring they sailed down the river to the northern sea,

each Ithacan steering a ship rowed by Goths, and partly by fighting and partly by trading acquired an immense store of amber as well as of precious metal. And when this was divided Odysseus wished to go home. But Ildico said: 'You cannot go until you have seen and lifted up the son I am going to bear you, and given him a name.' So he remained yet another winter. And the son was born, and Odysseus named him Euboulus, for he determined that he should be a giver of wise counsel to the Goths, which name his mother turned into Gothic and called him Amala. But when the spring came Ildico told Odysseus that he might go, for her son would be all the husband or children she would ever need. So Odysseus and his men returned southward. But Amala became a ruler of all the Goths and ancestor of their kings.¹ Only in later days the Goths, confusing and blending Odysseus with the divinity whom he taught, supposed him the son of Odin, the god of wisdom.

Meanwhile with helpful current and favouring winds Odysseus returned once more to Ithaca. As his ship entered the usually busy port he found it all deserted. The streets, too, were empty. But outside the Palace there was a shouting, dancing mob whom Telemachus appeared to be addressing. At Odysseus's approach the news of his coming spread like wildfire and in a moment the mob surged round him with deafening cheers, while from their midst a man, crying 'you have indeed come at the right moment,' waved in his hand a horribly disfigured head, the head of Thersites. He had taken more than twelve months to hang himself, but he had done it thoroughly, and that very morning the frenzied, starving populace had marched up to the Palace and threatened to destroy it, unless the author of all their miseries were handed over to them at once. The favourable wave of public emotion was made permanent by a generous remission of taxes, which Thersites had raised even higher, but which Odysseus's newly-won treasure enabled him to reduce, and by a wonderful harvest and a vintage long famous as that of 'the King's return.' The complete bankruptcy of the horse-breeding venture enabled father and son to agree in putting Laertes's farm under vines, with admirable results. As for Penelope, never had she felt her lord's absence so much during all the years of the Trojan War and of his wanderings as

¹ It is interesting to note that Odysseus's remote descendant, Theodoric the Great, not only embodied many of the characteristics of the real Odysseus, but also, as Dietrich of Berne, figured in the Nibelungenlied and other German legends as the great warrior-counsellor and solver of difficulties.

she had this last time, and not even the affair of the Gothic princess raised in her heart the slightest flutter of jealousy to dim the pure joy of having him home again. The enlargement of the Palace was completed, if not in such perfect harmony of taste as Helen might have commanded, at any rate in perfect harmony between King and Queen, who slept together happily for many years in the new Circean conjugal chamber. The composing of his memoirs occupied much of Odysseus's leisure, and afforded good reason for letting Telemachus gradually take a progressively larger part in the government of Ithaca. And thus a clear and golden evening closed the life of the greatest and most human figure that stands out from the misty background of the heroic age of Greece.

SOME THINGS I HAVE HELPED TO MAKE.

BY W. F. WATSON.

THERE is poetry in the words 'things I have helped to make.' To be able to say that one has made, or helped to make, an article is to feel that one has not lived in vain. The man who, proudly pointing to some finished thing, says, '*I* helped to make that,' is entitled to, and indeed does, lay emphasis on the personal pronoun, and feel the thrill of elation vibrate every fibre of his body. It may be the manifestation of the ego, but it is also the expression of the creative artist in man. Egoism is, after all, but the true expression of the individual, and every piece of work, however small and apparently unimportant, must express the individuality of the workman. The beautifully finished engine which pulsates with life and is capable of annihilating time and space, is the embodiment of countless individualities, in addition to the designer, from him who mines the minerals from which the parts are made, to him whose genius makes the thing throb. And who will deny the right of every one of them to feel proud that his work—his individuality—is part of the whole?

The tragedy of modern industry is that one's individuality tends to become submerged—crushed—in the machinery of factory administration. The ego in the workman should be encouraged, not repressed. He should be urged to take pride in his individuality, to express it in his work, and to feel that he is not merely a cog in the industrial wheel, but a very necessary and important factor in the process of production.

I cannot truthfully say that I have helped to make everything from a 'needle to a ship's anchor' during my career as a craftsman, but I *can* say that I have helped to make tungsten wire for electric lamp filaments, which was finer than human hair, and I have assisted in making torpedo destroyers; I have helped to make the means of transport from bicycles to aeroplanes. So many things have I helped to make that there are few mechanical things which contribute to the happiness and smoothness of our social life that I cannot point to and say, '*I* helped to make that.' I have assisted

in producing light, heat and power. If I go to a cinema I wonder whether the machine which throws the picture on the screen is one that I worked on. When I wash I can say I helped to make water meters. When a Bentley car recently broke the speed record and won the race, I was very curious to know whether it was fitted with the cams and steering joints I had made. During the War I worked on aeroplanes and anti-aircraft guns.

Although more than thirty years have elapsed, I still sometimes remark to my friend when travelling on a bus or tram, 'Yes! I worked where those ticket punches are made, when I was a kid of fifteen.' True they were only tiny iron rivets that I made, but they were necessary to keep the parts of the punch together. After a short period at screwmaking for the trade on a French machine, I went to work at Messrs. Chater Lea's cycle works, then established in Golden Lane, London, E.C., where I made fork mounts and, afterwards, crank bolts for bicycles. Next, I was employed at Messrs. Thomas' Sewing Machine Co., Clerkenwell Green, turning cams for sewing machines. Whilst I was with this firm, the first talking machine, known as the phonograph, was being put on the market, and I well remember turning some of the drums on which the wax cylinders revolved.

My next job was with a brewery engineer in East London, but I cannot claim to have helped to make the 'nation's beverage,' but I can say I have helped to make water meters, and oil and water-meter clocks. This was at the High Holborn works of Messrs. George Kent, long since removed to Luton, a firm world-famous for its water meters no less than for its knife cleaners, refrigerators, and other domestic appliances. It was here that I learned to cut vulcanite worms and to lacquer brass, and for part of the time I was the sole water-meter clock repairer.

From water meters to lathes is rather a startling change, but variety is the salt of life. I was just beginning to feel my feet as an improver mechanic, and I was adventurous enough to tackle any kind of turning no matter the nature of the job. During my stay in the lathe shop at the Gothic Works, Edmonton, I made various parts for lathes, mostly of the ornamental type, that is, machines for turning ornamental work. And very nice work it was. The lathes were accurately made and nicely finished, and many of them found their way into experimental workshops, and into the houses of gentlemen who took up turning as a hobby. As one who has had to earn his daily bread as a turner, I can say

that I know of no more fascinating hobby. In that respect I am different from the average turner!

I first helped to make motor-cars in 1901, although one could scarcely call the 'Century' a car. It was a two-seater three-wheeled vehicle, fitted with a 7-12 Aster engine, then imported from the continent—France, I believe. It ran on artillery wheels with wooden spokes, and one of my jobs was to make the steel studs which fixed the chain wheel to the spokes of the road wheel. The shop was badly equipped for carriers (a carrier is an attachment which is screwed on the end of the job in order that the lathe can drive it whilst the job is being machined) so I resolved to make one. I got a piece of cast steel, forged it to the correct shape, turned the shank, drilled and tapped it, and made the screw. It was a very nice tool by the time I had finished it, and for thirty years it was my constant companion in every shop I went to. I was real proud of that carrier. 'I made that when I was seventeen,' I told everybody. But, alas, I lost it a few weeks ago, where I do not know. It was a terrible loss—I felt as though I had lost part of myself. Equally valuable to me is a surface gauge I made, after the Starrett pattern, every part of which is my work. I would not part with it for anything. We love the things we make.

Another job I had at the Century Motor Works was turning the steering arms, a very awkward job in those days of primitive equipment, but we managed them somehow, although I dare swear the ball joints were far from being spherical. What crude, noisy, smelly things those cars were, to be sure, and how we would laugh if we saw one on the road to-day; but I remember standing round the stall at the motor show at the Agricultural Hall that year, and admiring the lines of the 'Century' Tricar which I had helped to make.

In 1903, fate decreed that I should go to Edinburgh, where I spent some six months of my life at a big firm of electrical engineers, assisting in making dynamos and motors to supply the people with light, heat and power. I was not destined to stay long in the Land o' Cakes; bad trade and family misfortunes brought me back to London, and I obtained employment at a firm of tea-weighing machine manufacturers, where I remained nine months. The Russo-Japanese War caused me to lose that job. The extensive Russian contracts of the firm were cancelled, and the place all but closed down.

My next adventure was helping to make magnetos, very small

and delicate work. At that time magnetos were more or less in their infancy, and much of the work was experimental, which only served to make it all the more interesting. The wanderlust did not allow me to stay very long with Messrs. Simms, so, from helping to make magnetos weighing a few pounds, I entered the service of the District Railway, where I turned bogie axles and wheels for trains weighing tons. I can claim to have turned the first pair of bogie wheels, and the first axle ever machined at the Mill Hill car sheds at Ealing. After staying there for about a year, quite a long time for me in those days—I just forget why I left—within a few days I came to anchor at Thornycroft's shipyard on the Thames at Chiswick, and was put on the oldest lathe in the shop; and it *was* an old creak! Here I made various fitments for torpedo-destroyers—pumps, sluice valves, and the like—the last five boats launched on the Thames. I also bored triple expansion cylinders for flat-bottomed boats, turned cranks and other parts for Thornycroft motor engines. But the two jobs standing out most vividly in my memory were searchlight projectors and drilling jigs. The projectors were about three feet six inches long and four and a half feet in diameter. They were made of sheet steel riveted to an angle-iron ring at each end, which had to be recessed to take the glass lenses. The practical engineer will appreciate the difficulties to be overcome, first in fastening such a frail job to the faceplate, and then in machining it. As soon as the tool touched the angle-iron rings, vibration set up, and the tool 'chattered,' as it is called in the workshop. To overcome this, I lashed rope round the outside of the job, fixed wooden struts from the lathe centre to the inner rim of the angle iron, reversed the lathe and turned the tool upside down, a method which was entirely successful. The jigs were for drilling the numerous holes in the engine crank-cases. In some of the jigs there were more than forty holes, each one of which had to be bored separately, and all had to be accurately spaced to a limit of one two-thousandth part of an inch. When boring the outer holes, the body of the jig, weighing, perhaps, a hundredweight, was revolving eccentrically, and the whole art was in fixing counter-weights to balance the job correctly, for a few ounces out of balance would mean five to ten thousandths of an inch in the distance between the holes. Sometimes it was possible to get a hole 'dead on' in a few minutes; others might take hours to get right. I always made my money on jig boring—it is a knack as much as anything. I confess I

enjoyed the eighteen months or so I spent at Chiswick, and I may have remained there had the firm not shifted to Woolston. But perhaps it's just as well that I didn't—I may have missed many useful experiences.

After a very brief spell at Napier's—so short that I cannot recall what I did there—and a longer stay at a smaller motor works, I landed at a place called the Albany Manufacturing Co., which specialised in water-circulation pumps, and developing patents. One job I handled was the worms for a patent steering-gear. The pitch of the worm was eleven-sixteenths, and it was both right and left handed. The gun-metal nut it engaged into was made in two halves, one screwed right hand and one left, so that when the worm was turned by means of the steering-wheel, one-half of the nut went one way and the other half in the opposite direction, thus conveying the steering motion. Several turners had unsuccessfully tried to cut these worms before I tackled them, and as a little encouragement, the foreman offered me a half-penny an hour rise if I did the job properly. I got the rise all right.

The next firm of importance that had the benefit of my labour was the Wilkinson Sword Company, where I made fixtures and tools for making swords and bayonets. I think I would rather be employed in helping to make ploughshares, but one cannot always be choosers, and, anyway, much of my time was spent on other work, for the firm also did work for the trade and developed patents. For instance, we experimented with a small four-cylinder engine for motor-cycles, and I think I made every blessed part of the first one—cylinders, pistons, rings, crank and crankcase, gear-box and gear-wheels, timing wheels and case, worm transmitting gear, valves, and even the screws. It was a lovely little engine, but a bit too expensive for those times. Another interesting job I did there was making half a dozen automatic shaving brushes—or, rather, I made eight, one extra for both myself and the foreman. I still possess mine although I have never troubled about getting hair fixed in it. The handle of the thing, which was made wholly of brass, was a hollow cylinder to hold the shaving cream, and the cream was forced through a tiny hole into the hair, by means of a piston operating on a screw and turned by means of a knurled nut at the end. A very ingenious device, but as far as I know, it was never marketed.

The famous firm of Laystall, known everywhere as cylinder

re-bore and crankshaft specialists, claimed me soon afterwards, but that was in the early days of the firm, when they were established in a cellar in Queen Street, Cheapside. They had no cylinder or crankshaft grinding machines in those days, everything had to be done on the centre lathe. Cylinders had to be accurately set up on the faceplate and bored, and then we 'ground' them with coarse emery-cloth. The crankshafts had to be mounted on blocks—'dogs' we used to call them—correctly centred, nicely balanced, swung in the centres, turned, and 'lapped' with emery-cloth. And we were able to get the bore of the cylinders, and the journals and pins of the crankshafts, within one-thousandth part of an inch of being round and parallel. At any rate, Messrs. Laystall built up their reputation for the excellence of their work by such primitive methods as I have described.

Working by gaslight in a cellar is not altogether good for the eyes, and as mine began to trouble me after about eighteen months, I sought fresh woods and pastures new in the factory of a firm of electrical engineers. My main work here was turning the parts for electrical gear, used for training guns on the target on a battleship. One set I helped to make was for the Queen Elizabeth. Everything, including the ball-bearing, was made of gunmetal because of the water; all parts had to be accurately made and flawless in finish—and one can get a lovely finish on gunmetal. The work was a treat to look at when finished.

After a year with that firm I again took wing and alighted in ancient Verulam Street, off Gray's Inn Road. This firm specialised in developing patents, and the two they were then developing were a special typecasting machine, and an automatic machine for making those collar studs we sometimes purchase from a hawker in a pub. 'Ere y're, sir. Three a penny, all made to work.' That was a short job, about two or three months—I think I got the sack for 'losing time.' From the City to Hanwell is a long stretch, but as I was living about midway, it mattered not. Messrs. Duram, Limited, made tungsten wire for electric lamp filaments. A brief description of how this wire was made may not be uninteresting. The bars of metal, about half an inch square and six inches long, made by the chemist in the laboratory, were made very hot and hammered in a machine capable of delivering some thousands of blows a minute, which reduced the bars to three-sixteenths of an inch in diameter, and lengthened them accordingly. This process made the metal ductile, and the bars were then drawn

through a series of hardened steel dies until the diameter was reduced to approximately 0.03 of an inch. Then, after being thoroughly annealed to restore the ductileness impaired by drawing, the wire was drawn through diamonds down to a diameter of less than a thousandth part of an inch.

My work consisted of making the steel dies, and aluminium holders for the diamond containers. The most interesting job I had at this place was building complete a machine for polishing the diamonds. It had thirty-two spindles and was capable of polishing as many diamonds simultaneously. The diamonds, firmly embedded in aluminium or brass containers, remained stationary, and ordinary domestic needles revolved at a very high speed, the point resting in the centre of the diamond, jewellers' rouge being used as polishing material. I was quite proud of that machine—and so was the foreman. After a spell at that kind of delicate work, I went to Hoe's, the famous printing press manufacturers, and turned huge cast-iron rollers for multiple printing machines, but War broke out a week or so later, and I was one of the victims of the financial panic that ensued. There was then only one place for engineers, and that was Woolwich Arsenal, so there I went and assisted in making three-inch high-angle guns for fighting enemy aircraft. Of all the depressing places I have ever been to Woolwich is the worst—I was melancholy the whole of the time I was there. As soon as a favourable opportunity presented itself, I packed up my traps and left what Colonel Burnaby once referred to as 'the sink of iniquity.'

By a stroke of good luck, I obtained employment with a small entrepreneur who had workshops along the Pentonville Road. He had a beautiful boring machine of German make, fixed up in an old stable. He was a lovely man to work for, was Mr. Mepsted, and I can honestly say he was the best man I ever worked for. But I am encroaching on the subject of another article. Boring crankcases, mostly aluminium, for lorry and aeroplane engines was my principal work in that shop. I think I must have bored thousands of them. I could make that machine respond to my lightest touch—it could almost talk! One day the boss took me into his office and showed me a wonderful aeroplane crankcase. It was an Austrian Daimler, I believe, which had been brought down by one of our airmen. Although it looked very frail, it was made of very tough metal, such as we had not previously seen in this country.

'Do you think we can bore crankcases like that in this shop, Bill?' asked the boss.

'Well, gov'nor,' said I, after carefully examining the job, 'I suppose they have been done before, somewhere!'

'Oh, yes! Of course they have!' he replied.

'Right-o, then I'm sure I can do 'em.'

'Well, Bill,' said the boss. 'I shall get a good price for them, and if we can turn them out all right, you'll get a good price.' And I did!

The drawings and specifications came along in due course, and the first thing I had to do was to make the boring and drilling jigs. The drilling jigs were fairly simple on such a machine as I was operating, but the boring jig was a bit more difficult. It was more than five feet long, and weighed, I should say, a couple of hundredweights. Now, any engineer knows that the hole carrying the housings for the cam-shaft bearing must be in perfect alignment with the crank-shaft bearings, and when I had finished that jig, the crank-bearing pilot holes were not more than one and a half thousandth part of an inch out of parallel with the cam-housing pilot holes. With that jig, I bored hundreds of crankcases, and not one of them was rejected for inaccuracy, although many were scrapped because the metal was bad. I stayed with Mr. Mepsted until the middle of 1919, and I should not have left him then but for circumstances over which I had no control. Indeed, it was the longest job I have ever had.

I then got into contact with a Russian inventor who wanted a competent mechanic to help him develop an electrical machine which, when perfected, would have been the nearest approach to perpetual motion ever devised. The principle of the machine was to harness the forces of repulsion as well as the forces of attraction, which is, of course, the principle of electricity. It is not possible to give the technicalities of the invention, but the old chap claimed for his invention, that once started by some outside force—a small motor—it would go on for ever, subject to wear of bearings, collecting and distributing electricity at one and the same time. What eventually became of the man and his machine I do not know for certain, but I am told that he took it to Russia. Certainly there were great possibilities in it.

Then came the great slump of 1920, and there followed a bleak period of protracted idleness from over which I do not propose, at the moment, to lift the veil. After three and a half years un-

employment, I entered the service, in March, 1924, of the firm which builds London's motor-buses, where I spent some nine months turning gear-wheels, shafts and what not, for those ubiquitous vehicles which take us from where we are to where we want to go. In fairness to the Associated Equipment Company, I ought to say that in addition to building London's motor-buses, they make buses for many other towns and countries. And I might also add that the steel used in making the gear-wheels and other parts of the buses is the finest procurable, that is why there are so few accidents resulting from the mechanism of the engine or gearbox.

I spent the next eighteen months helping to make cinema projectors, and I must confess that I was amazed at the wonderful and delicate mechanism of the machine which throws the picture on the screen. It is not generally known that in order to meet the requirements of the London County Council, and other local administrative bodies, and in order to reduce the risk of fire to a minimum, a shutter falls between each picture, and when it is realised that the shutter must rise and fall many times each second as the film passes through the machine in order to give a continuous moving picture, the delicacy and accuracy of the mechanism will be fully appreciated. I wonder if the people watching the picture ever think of the mechanic who makes the machine which throws the picture on the screen!

From there I went to a small dusthole of a shop, where motor components were made for the trade. There I made and helped to make components for many different types of car, principally the Bentley. For two and a half years I had charge of the machine shop, and although it was a small shop, with limited equipment, we competed favourably with many other and bigger factories. But that was because the overhead charges were light.

Then I worked for a firm specialising in filters of every description. It was a comfortable shop and the work was interesting, but, unfortunately my health broke down and I had to give it up, to the regret of the works manager. Gumming machines were the next things I helped to make, at a firm the boss of which is an old-fashioned engineer who disliked any modern ideas. The plant was frightfully antiquated; he would have nothing but old English lathes, which would not have been so bad if they were laid down on solid foundations. The roller carrying the gum, which had to be very nicely spread on the paper, must be perfectly true, but the

lathe, being on a shaky foundation, 'walked' as the tool travelled along the metal, consequently, it was extremely difficult to keep the rollers true and round. When I pointed this out to the 'old man,' he merely remarked that they had always been turned on that lathe. He failed to realise that they could be done in half the time if the vibration accruing from bad foundations was eliminated, and I was too disgusted to argue the point with one so dense. And my last job was helping to erect switchboards and fuse-boxes for an electrical installation firm.

Such are some of the things I have helped to make. What a variety of work to be sure—what experiences! Ticket punches, bicycles, sewing machines, phonographs, water meters, lathes, motor engines, electric motors and dynamos, tea-weighing machines, magnetos, bogie wheels and axles, torpedo destroyers, searchlight projectors, pumps, swords, bayonets, electrical training gear, type-casting machines, tungsten wire, printing presses, anti-aircraft guns, aeroplanes, a patent electrical machine, cinema projectors, filters, and electrical plant. And I make so bold as to say that there are not many other mechanics with similar experiences.

I suppose there are some physically and mentally fit people in the world, who pass through this vale of tears without helping to make anything whatsoever. I do not envy them—I profoundly pity them—they have surely missed the joys of life. A far, far better man is he who can proudly point to something and say, '*I helped to make that.*'

THE SHORTHORN BULL.

FROM a narrow path between dense growth of tree and bush three men rode out into an open space—a wide bay fringed by the heavy green of the forest. From where the three riders had emerged long steep ridges, huge as if thrown by a Cyclopean plough, plunged downwards to bury themselves under a confusion of shaggy contours which emerged from the thick verdure of the lower slopes like giant porpoises plunging in a dark green sea. Coarse herbage, some three feet high, clothed the ridges, dotted with groups of trees and clumps of bushes, straggling survivors of the sylvan host which decay, fire and wind had decimated. The riders followed a track of trodden grass diagonal to the slant of the ground and leading gradually upwards to a spur whence they perceived below them a dip in which a little stream which had slid secretly beneath undergrowth down a long trench in the side of the mountain, lay tranquil and discovered in an open pool. Ranging up the sides of this glen and round the pool at the bottom was a great concourse of cattle.

With deliberate feet their ponies bore them down the rocky path among the rufous coats, milky breath and comfortable sound of munching ruminants.

'What do you think of that lot?' said the dark man in shorts, a terai whose brim just hung to the crown, a khaki shirt and putties.

'A nice level lot, the best we've seen, would do credit to an English farm,' said the more civilised man, wearing trousers and a spick and span terai. He was evidently a visitor. 'They seem enjoying their grass, and it looks good.'

'They're only collecting ticks,' said the third man. He had straw-coloured hair and a sharp-featured face with a stiff red skin. He looked the part of 'Der Geist der stets verneint.' His battered topee, grey shirt, and shorts bore the impress of a long and close companionship with their owner. 'They'd be much better on the plateau where the grass is not so long.'

'You damned old pessimist,' said the dark man. His voice tried to disguise exasperation. 'If they were up there he would say they should be down here,' he added, turning to the visitor.

They crossed the little stream and the soft ground about it and rode a little way up the opposing bank to a spot where the bright terra-cotta showed. Here the dark man drew up short and directed by gesture the attention of the stranger to a spot farther down the stream. Beneath them was a haze of flowers, blue and red—delphinium, lupin and tritoma. Further back, tall forest trees, festooned above with parasitic vines and other creepers, declined with the fall of the ground through an obscurity which gradually sobered their bright tapestries of jasmine and clematis, into a matted darkness, broken only where the foam of the stream leapt into transient gleams of sunlight. In the foreground a big bull raised his massive head and looked with quick inquiry at the men, while the liquid green of his last mouthful frothed round the edges of his mouth.

‘What do you think of that fellow?’

‘Fine beast, in fact, I’ve seldom seen a finer. That’s a nice long level back of his, and broad hips. There should be good handle there too— The only fault I can see is that his horns come forward a bit.’

‘I am glad you like him,’ said the dark man with obvious satisfaction. The bull in this setting made just such a picture as he wished to fix in the mind of the visitor whose opinion he knew would have weight with the great ones of the cattle trade.

The bull, being satisfied that the three men were there merely for purposes of admiration, turned his head away to flick his long tongue at an irritant something on his shoulder. Then he renewed his stare.

‘That’s a powerful neck and shoulder,’ said the stranger. ‘Where did he come from?’

‘Bred here out of a second-cross cow by a grandson of Collynie Prince.’

‘How old is he?’

‘About twenty months.’

‘I thought he had good blood in him, but what is that cow he’s with?’

‘That is a second cross—all this herd are.’

‘No,’ said the fair man, ‘she is not. She’s a grade cow.’

‘My dear friend,’ said the dark man, ‘the whole of this herd are double crossed, as you should know.’

‘Well, just look at her shape—you can almost see a hump.’

‘I believe you are right.’

'I know I am ; but why is she running with this lot, I wonder ?'

'I don't know. I'll ask Kibiringi about it.'

Now the reason why that inferior animal, which bore upon her carcass the marks of her lowly origin, was in such company was simply a whim of the bull. With the more shapely second grades he would condescend to brief and vigorous amours, but for a constant companion he had chosen this plain female. Without her he was morose, unquiet, and intractable. The charm which she possessed for bulls had earned her the name of Mchawi (the witch).

'Well,' said the dark man, 'I wanted to show you that crowd in the open ; there are a couple more fine bulls among them, but Colin, as we call him, is our show piece.'

'Do you mean to show him ?'

'I hope to.'

'I think he should do well out here.'

They turned their horses as the stranger spoke, and rode up higher, following a broad trail through long grass with scattered trees and shrubs which limited vision to short distances. The stranger turned to the fair man.

'Why don't you like their feeding down there ?' he asked.

'It looks good grass. Are you afraid of wild beasts ?'

'Oh no, they really give us very little trouble.'

'But how about the lions you shot the day before I came ?'

'Oh, that was miles from here, on the Naivasha side.'

'How many were there ?'

'Three or four—we got two and probably accounted for another.'

'Then do you run your cattle out at night.'

'Not lately we haven't ; we bring them up to an enclosure we call the "boma."'

'Do we ?' said the fair man. 'Old Kibiringi says he does !'

His tone was resentful. Against his—the manager's—wishes, the dark man, who was owner of the land and cattle, had suddenly got rid of the skilled Somali headman, and had entrusted the care of the most valued herd to old Kibiringi—a mere Masai savage. He disapproved of Kibiringi because he was a Masai, and of the Masai because Kibiringi was one of them.

'What makes you say that ? He spends every night with them.'

'Oh, all right, you take his say so.' Then turning to the stranger, 'anyway, our losses are only about three per cent. in the year from vermin.'

'Vermin including?'

'Well, of course, it may include some two-legged thieves, but I meant the four-footed ones—hyenas, leopards, lions?'

From a clump of bushes not more than forty yards from the horsemen, a pair of hard, cold, amber eyes watched them, glittering. They were the restless sentinels of a body and brain which were waiting there for night and its chances. As the horsemen pulled up a little farther on the body slunk away into more distant cover. The brain had received messages of the sound of horses' trampling, and had opened the slits of eyes, and then other messages of smell and sight which had made the eyes glare and the saliva rise, and through the nerves of the body had tingled a little tremor of disgust and doubt as brain associated these figures—baboons on horseback, if he were to classify them—and that smell with something strange, which, not long ago, had come on to attack with deadly noise and flame—relentlessly, so that of four lions he alone had come away unseen and unhurt—alone, not that he cared for that, save that hunting was more difficult. So the vermin lay still, biding his occasion.

The riders were now on level ground and the spaces between the clumps had widened. They were near the limits of the scattered vegetation which fringed the open plain.

The visitor drew rein. 'That is a magnificent tree in front of us. It must have seventy feet of clear bole,' he said.

'Yes,' replied the dark man, 'it is a good specimen, though there are some even taller lower down.'

'What do you call it?'

'That is a mugaita.'

'Any use?'

'None here,' said the fair man; 'too heavy and hard.'

'Admirable for building, furniture, and sleepers,' said the dark man.

The stranger rode forward to the tree.

Behind and to the right of them was the line of the forest distinct against the lowered light. In front the sun was near its setting over a humpy plain swept by a north-east wind blowing from the Indian Ocean steadily. The grass bending under it caught the rays on their tips, which, as they waved, opened and shut spaces of translucent cinnamon under arching wisps of ruddy gold.

The horsemen sat there for a minute watching the illimitability contract as the shadows grew. They splashed the gold hither and

thither as they rode into it, then jogged their ponies against the swift fall of the tropical darkness and reached the homestead just as the lights began to lighten the windows, and over cocktails renewed their disputes.

After the men had gone the bull came up to his companion, gave her a friendly lick on the ear, placed his great neck on her shoulder and said, 'Time we moved off—too many flowers here.'

The other cattle were streaming up the furrow in the hill by the direct path home.

The two climbed to the ride by which the horsemen had gone. They knew there was sweet feed by that way, and they could turn when they reached the top and join the herd. So they went leisurely, snuffing the herbage as they passed and cropping a tuft or two. The bull found a place where ikoka grass and clovers were inviting appetite, and settled down with delight, the cow grazing placidly beside him. He took the best, or at any rate as much as he desired, out of that patch, and then, seized with youthful ebullience, began frisking, heels up, nose down, just for the sport of it, until seeing something—lizard or frog—move under a fallen limb of a tree, he must stuff his nose under it. That was an idea for something to play with. He worked his horns under a hollow in the trunk, and then a heave with his splendid sinews, and up went the branch with weeds clinging to it, a full hundredweight of timber into the air, and crash it came on to the ground. That was fun, and he called on the cow to watch while he did it again, letting it fall on his neck and tossing it up once more. She, good dame, was too intent on the luscious grass to pay much heed to these strong bull feats, but her motherly instincts bade her look up and say, 'Good for you—you're strong enough, but take care or you'll break a horn,' and then she was down to her diet. He was glutted with feeding, and turning his head again to see if she was following, started at a trot which soon became a gallop along the path between the bushes. He pulled up in a while when he found she was getting left behind, and became interested again in the grass. She drew up by him and rubbed her nose fondly against his strong flanks, then started to see what sort of spot he had chosen. She got one or two good pulls and lifted her head. What was that scent in the air? Her jaws ceased working as she sniffed. It might be fancy. She worked that mouthful round, then tucked it down into her paunch for subsequent enjoyment, and sniffed

again. She did not like that scent. She felt nervous. It was growing dark. Indistinct objects moved. A squadron of shrikes flew over, crying stridently as they passed 'Take care!'

She started to run, then stood still trembling. Faugh, that stench! The bull came up. Conscious though he was of that taint of something unpleasant, even hostile, around them, he could not understand the terror which emanated from her. Her tremblings, the panting breath from her nostrils beat like a discharge of molecules of fear on the nerves of his great body; fear of what he did not know. He was bewildered, wild to rush at something or from something unknown. He snorted and quivered with fury at his terror. What is it? he wanted to know from her. She with his bulk by her side, familiar, bovine like her own, for a moment was calmer. Was he not the lord protector of the herd? But as she noted him—balked, incomprehensive of the sensation which was tingling the primitive ancestral stuff in her, scarcely diluted by smug blood of Europe, her trust vanished. She knew intuitively what present danger that scent implied—danger of the furtive beast which leapt from ambush on lonely kine. Instinct cried in her for the one sure refuge—the phalanx of bodies close pressed together and the serried front of lowered horns. She broke away and tore madly onward for the safety of the herd. As she fled she heard something rustling its swift way to cut her off. However she might gallop, it gained on her. The bull started slowly after her. Not until then did he understand what had frightened them. But now he saw that something was moving through the long grass between him and Mchawi—something heavy and low and extraordinarily quick. He dashed forward to intercept it, then checked. He waited for it to appear. Appear it did, but further from him than he had thought possible, and nearer to Mchawi,—a long dark body. With monstrous bounds it drew up, then leapt for the cow's hind-quarters, striking with its forepaws as it leapt. Up went her heels in the air and she gave it a dunt which spoilt its grip. It hung on with claws trying to get astride of her—tearing her. She reeled under the weight, and it lost or loosed its hold. She seemed to recover herself, made a few brave bounds forward towards the mugaita tree, tottered, sagged and collapsed, wounded mortally.

The lion gave one look towards the bull and then went to finish his work, leisurely as if savouring by deliberation the long feast of luscious blood already gushing from the cow's torn belly. But

the postponement of his meal was to be longer than he thought. He heard the bull moving behind him. Through his rage and disgust at this interference flickered dismay. The furious beast thundering down on him possessed a weight and might more than equal to his own. And Colin had shed all fear. Instead had come to him the desire for battle which reddens arenas in Spain. Once the unknown menace had resolved itself into something to be killed, the impulse to rush, hurl, tear and gore for the joy of it took him. Simba knew better than to meet him full and made to slip aside. But he was not quite quick enough. The bull's left horn just caught him. Had it been square set as the show-ring demanded it might have done him little damage. As it was, it gouged into the hinder part of his belly and ripping the muscles of his groin tore free as the bull lifted his head to toss. The impetus of the bull's charge swept him on and Simba, mad with pain, sprang at him as he was turning. But the bull turned quickly, and the lion's hurt curtailed his spring. His deadly claws tore deep rents in the bull's hide but he could not make good his hold, or fasten his keen teeth into it, and as the bull swerved, shrank back before those uncomfortable horns.

They were now face to face. The lion, eyes lambent with the lust of blood and the fury of repulse above a snarling chasm set with jagged teeth, shifted slowly sideways as if to make another oblique attack, the bull, head down, eyes glowering, muttering, prompted by nature's abhorrence of an undefended flank, moved slowly backward to the mugaita tree. Between them lay the cow's body. Both had learned caution, but the lion had suffered most and learned it best, for, his strength ebbing with his blood, he knew himself no match for his adversary. He crouched, then crawled, then crouched again on his side of the body, not daring to approach too near the coveted feast. He left a trail of blood where he crawled and a bigger patch where he rested. The bull stood still, turning his head now this way now that, as the red eyes moved. The moon, appearing equivocally through cloud, lessened the feline advantage in nocturnal vision. Still the bull waited, murmuring, muttering; but he seemed to feel his chance was coming and suddenly from his deep lungs rushed a loud bellow as of triumph. The effect was unexpected. Mchawi, who had lain there as if dead, moaned and struggled to rise. Simba grunted in apprehension, as from the long grass on to the trodden patch stole another form, long, stealthy, supple like his own. He summoned all his courage and sped

snarling to assert his rights to the carcass. The new-comer dragged a hind leg but he was quicker of the two and reached the cow first. Colin came third, but quickest.

The three men dressed in lounge-suits came out on the stoep on their way to dinner. The dark man was maintaining that it was best to go all out for beef and cross with Aberdeen-Angus.

'Doddies would do well here, they are real wrestlers,' said the third man.

'That's all right,' said the fair man, 'but my idea is to keep to shorthorns and go for a dual purpose beast to meet eventualities.'

'What do you mean?' rejoined the dark man, 'what eventualities?'

'Well, you haven't got your meat market on the spot and you want slaughter-houses, cold storage and other things which may never come.' He stopped abruptly.

'Hullo,' he said. 'Hear that? There's one beast at least not in the boma.'

'I didn't hear anything.'

'Then you're deaf'—and turning to the third man, 'Didn't you?'

'Yes, I heard a noise, it might have been a roar—or a bellow.'

'It was a bull's bellow.'

'Well, it might have come from the boma or some of the No. 1 herd,' said the dark owner tentatively.

'It came from down there where we last stopped before we rode home. I bet you Mr. Kibiringi has not bomaed the whole herd. I'll bet you a sovereign.'

'All right,' said the dark man, 'I'll take you. After dinner we'll go down and look.'

Kibiringi, as a matter of fact, was not near the boma, but in the kitchen. Now that he was free from constant supervision, he left the cattle to wander into the boma as they would, and strolled down there himself later and ever later. It was light and cheerful among the boys at the back of the house: down there it was dark and lonely; the night was long, and even counting the cattle by fives and tens, and sleeping did not occupy much of it. Besides, the count never came right and nothing had happened so far. At length, however, he set off, swinging his lantern. He had not gone far when he heard a sound of lowing which did not come from the boma. He stood still listening, then retraced his steps to fetch

the gun which he had left behind. As he passed near the verandah he was hailed by the Europeans.

'Are all the cattle in the boma?' said the dark man.

'No, one not come, I hear him out there.'

'Which one is it?'

'Bull.'

'The big one?'

That puzzled Kibiringi. It was best to be truthful here. 'I don't know.'

'Where are you going?'

'Fetch gun.'

'You ass. Your gun should be in the boma—wait a minute.'

The three Europeans with rifles and torches and a boy carrying a lantern joined Kibiringi. They were guided by a deep and frequent muttering, expanding now and then in volume. They did not need their lanterns. Before them rose the mugaita tree, a stately column breaking into a spray of leaves which twittered in the light breeze. Behind it the moon divested of her mufflings laid the long shadow of its clean bole solid and sharp upon the ground. Blurring that sharpness at one point was the bulk of the bull and at another the body of the cow stretched across its line.

'It's old Colin,' said the dark man—as the bull broke into a higher fuller note of welcome to the men.

'Look under that bush—right,' said the stranger, as something stole into its shadow.

Crack went his rifle, and the beast moved into the grass—the fair man fired and it made a feeble bound and fell back. The stranger fired again and it lay still. The stranger stepped towards the musikia from which it had emerged. 'Steady,' said the fair-headed man, 'there's something there still.'

'By gum,' said the stranger, 'it's another lion—dead.'

'No, not quite, but he won't move. His entrails are torn out,' said the fair man, peering into the shadow. They warily approached the spot where the other lion had fallen. Its spine was broken and another bullet in the brain finished its life. 'See,' said the fair man as they examined its body, 'someone has put a bullet into its hind leg. It is probably one of those we saw the other day.'

Meanwhile the dark man and Kibiringi had gone up to the bull. It recognised them as friends. Indeed it needed help. Its hide was hanging in strips from its right flank, its neck and head rasped with deep scratches. Its horns were crimson to the roots; blood

was dripping from its nostrils and matted its love-locks and streaked its crest. It was evidently very exhausted.

'Go to Bwana Stephens's house and ask him to bring bandages' (Stephens was the pupil), 'sponges, disinfectant and a covering. No, I'll write a note to him. Kibiringi fetch water. Off with you—*upes! maramoja* (Quick—at once).'

The fair man and the visitor came up examining the ground as they walked.

'He must have had a go with both lions,' said the visitor.

'He could not have tackled them both at once,' said the dark man.

'No,' said the fair man. 'I think he laid out the one under the musikia bush yonder first, because it was evidently quite done for. It has been bleeding like a pig and its inside is on the floor. Then he had a go with the other. By the by, I believe you hit him the other day because he has a .303 bullet in his thigh. Now if you had only used a decent rifle you would have saved the bull.'

'I have as it is. He is not going to die. I doubt that lion ever went for him.'

They went across to where the second lion lay. 'There is your bullet. And feel there—his shoulder blade is cracked—who did that if the bull didn't?' said the fair man.

Kibiringi came back with a pail of water and they set to work to sponge the bull's hurts with their handkerchiefs. As the grateful coolness trickled over his head he put out his curly tongue and licked it and the arms which were swabbing him.

'I don't see any vital wound,' said the dark man. 'If we can prevent these scratches from turning septic he should live—brave old beast.'

'It would probably be kinder to shoot him at once,' said the fair man.

'I don't agree—he'll pull round, I bet you a sovereign.'

'I won't take you—you owe me one already.'

'Oh, about Kibiringi bomaing the lot. It looks as if I had lost that, but I shan't pay until this old fellow dies.'

'Very well. That won't be long. What do you think?' he added, turning to the visitor.

'Well, I'm afraid he will never do himself justice in the showing after this. It is bad luck, because he is a magnificent beast. I hope you'll have a long time to wait for your sovereign, though.'

And he did, but Kibiringi's dismissal was prompt.

W. M. CROWDY.

TULIP AND CAMELLIA.

(THE TWO DUMAS.)

A ONE-ACT PLAY.

BY O. W. FIRKINS.

NOTE.

THE two Alexandre Dumas, father and son, were respectively the quadroon grandson and the octoroon great-grandson of a French marquis (A. Davy) and a Santo Domingo negress (Marie Dumas). The mother of Dumas *filis* was Marie Labay, dressmaker, whom the elder Dumas never married. He did, however, acknowledge and legitimate the son, and even wrested him by constraint of law from the reluctant mother. The discord passed, and his relations with Marie Labay became friendly. The son was always loyal to the mother, and was passionately attached to the father, whose excesses, in a half-paternal way, he strove to discipline. (See *Un Père Prodigue*, 1859, and the preface to *Le Fils Naturel*.) Some English-speaking readers may need to be reminded that the author of the once scandalous *Camille* was an energetic and impassioned, if in some respects peculiar, preacher of morality. The marriage suggested in this playlet is fictitious.

CHARACTERS.

ALEXANDRE DUMAS, 48 years.

ALEXANDRE DUMAS, his son, 26 years.

MARIE LABAY, mother of the younger Dumas, 43 years.

DOMINIQUE, valet and factotum, 60 years.

The Scene is a furnished apartment in Paris; the year is 1850.

The CURTAIN rises on the writing-room of the two Dumas, plain, rectangular, dingily papered room, with door at back leading into the reception-room and side-doors right and left leading respectively to the sleeping-rooms of the son and father. Fireplace, bulging with rubbish, toward the front right. Two writing-desks at left and right. The one at left is orderly almost to daintiness; the other is a confusion of papers, writing-utensils, and knick-knacks; a shabby writing-jacket is tossed slantwise over the whole. Sofa

at front left ; table with chair or two near fireplace. A few scattered arm-chairs.

It is eleven o'clock in the morning. DOMINIQUE is dusting the room ; DUMAS FILS, a suavely austere and caressingly precise young fellow with a slightly tropical complexion, writes slowly and ponderingly at the desk left. In one of his pauses his straying eye falls upon his father's desk.

DUMAS FILS (with a mixture of boldness and timidity). Dominique, don't you think you could hang up that jacket ?

DOMINIQUE (pausing upright at centre). Your father's orders are most strict, sir.

DUMAS FILS. Yes, yes, I know—about his papers certainly. But a jacket doesn't belong upon a desk.

DOMINIQUE (impassively). No, sir. (He dusts the sofa.)

DUMAS FILS (with some impatience). You remove his cigar-stumps from the desk, don't you ?

DOMINIQUE. Not without his permission, sir.

DUMAS FILS. But that's so unreasonable.

DOMINIQUE (hesitating). If it were not presuming, sir—

DUMAS FILS (very kindly). Dominique, a servant of your years and fidelity can't presume. Say anything you like.

DOMINIQUE (bowing). You are very good, sir. I was about to remark that M. Dumas was most sensitive about the carrying-out of his most unreasonable orders.

DUMAS FILS (thoughtfully). I see. It's a test of the servant's loyalty.

DOMINIQUE. I would add, of his respect, sir. A good servant doesn't presume to be reasonable when his master isn't.

DUMAS FILS (rising and moving toward jacket). You don't mind my hanging it up, Dominique ?

DOMINIQUE (with portentous deference). I should not venture to discourage M. Alexandre from taking any risks that he thinks proper.

DUMAS FILS (touching the jacket, to DOMINIQUE'S evident disquiet). Perhaps you are right. It should be respected, the jacket, like Diderot's robe de chambre. You don't know about that, Dominique ? (He leaves the jacket.)

DOMINIQUE (greatly relieved, dusting the young man's desk with grateful diligence). No, sir. The service of your father has been arduous. I regret that it has left me very little time to cultivate my mind.

DUMAS FILS. I wish we writers were half so sensible as you are, Dominique.

DOMINIQUE. You are very good, sir.

DUMAS FILS (*stopping at fireplace*). I wonder if one could set a match to that rubbish.

DOMINIQUE (*ceasing to dust*). It would be physically possible, sir.

DUMAS FILS (*kneeling and taking a match from his pocket*). Why not morally possible? (DOMINIQUE *comes to fireplace, and surveys these operations*. DUMAS FILS *looks up*.) What is it, Dominique? This isn't litter; it's rubbish.

DOMINIQUE. It's your father's rubbish, sir. (*Pause*.) You may not know, sir, that when a publisher is urgent and—and noisy, your father sometimes goes to the fireplace for copy. I heard him say once that he found some of his brightest ideas in the fireplace.

DUMAS FILS. In his own cast-off manuscripts, I suppose.

DOMINIQUE (*tactfully*). Or in yours, sir; he didn't say which.

DUMAS FILS. My father takes from many sources, but I have never seen any of my own ideas in print under his signature.

DOMINIQUE (*encouragingly*). You are still young, sir. That honour will come in due time. (*This is to reward DUMAS FILS for getting up without igniting the rubbish*.) Allow me. (*He dusts the knees of DUMAS FILS's trousers*. DUMAS FILS *looks down at him thoughtfully*.)

DUMAS FILS (*pleasantly*). I have a feeling, Dominique, that I get very little of my own way in this establishment.

DOMINIQUE (*obsequiously*). I hope I have neglected nothing, sir.

DUMAS FILS (*still pleasantly*). This fireplace is partly mine, you know. My father and I occupy these rooms together.

DOMINIQUE (*dusting the table*). I know your father is generous, sir.

DUMAS FILS. Generous? I wonder if you know who pays the rent.

DOMINIQUE. I never gossip with the landlord's servants, sir.

DUMAS FILS. Don't you? In your place I should listen at every keyhole.

DOMINIQUE. You are a novelist, M. Alexandre.

DUMAS FILS (*now by his own desk*). Dominique, when were you paid last?

DOMINIQUE. Not this month, sir. It escaped your father's memory.

DUMAS FILS (*quietly*). When were you paid last?

DOMINIQUE (*almost shamefacedly*). Four months ago.

DUMAS FILS (*taking bills from the desk*). There is your money.

DOMINIQUE (*greatly embarrassed*). I couldn't take it, sir, if it meant—if it meant——

DUMAS FILS (*with his usual kindness*). If it meant what?

DOMINIQUE. If it meant any criticism on your father.

DUMAS FILS (*smiling, but a little gravely*). It is a criticism of his memory—that is all.

DOMINIQUE (*taking the bills*). I thank you very much.

DUMAS FILS. Is my father stirring yet?

DOMINIQUE. Oh, yes, he wrote a chapter of the *Black Tulip* before coffee.

DUMAS FILS. Doesn't he take his coffee in bed?

DOMINIQUE. He wrote the chapter in bed. He can write quite easily between swallows.

DUMAS FILS. I should think he would stick his pen into the cream-jug.

DOMINIQUE. He has sometimes done that. This morning I had to prevent him from emptying the ink-well into his coffee.

DUMAS FILS (*with a faint sigh*). A great man must be allowed some oddities, Dominique.

DOMINIQUE. I was obliged to check him, sir. He cannot afford to waste both ink and coffee.

DUMAS FILS. At what hour did he get in this morning?

DOMINIQUE (*dusting about the fireplace*). At five o'clock. His cab nearly ran into a milk-wagon.

DUMAS FILS. You helped him upstairs?

DOMINIQUE. I was on hand, sir. He was very grateful for assistance.

DUMAS FILS. He was quiet?

DOMINIQUE. Quiet as a lamb, till he reached the bust of André Chénier on the third story—under the gas-jet. It is by that bust that he always stops to sing the first stanza of the Marseillaise.

DUMAS FILS. Did anybody interfere with you?

DOMINIQUE. M. Hubert, the assessor, came to the door of his room in his nightgown, and looked over the stair-rail.

DUMAS FILS. Did he say anything to you?

DOMINIQUE. No, sir.

DUMAS FILS. That means that he will speak to the landlord to-morrow.

DOMINIQUE (*proudly*). My master will know how to deal with impertinence from the landlord or anybody else.

DUMAS FILS (*with quiet significance*). The landlord will not speak to your master, Dominique. He will speak to me. (*Pause.*) He will tell me that his other tenants are threatening to leave the house.

DOMINIQUE. The bourgeois have no patriotism.

DUMAS FILS. Few of us are patriotic in our nightgowns. (*He turns to his desk as if to end the conversation. DOMINIQUE prepares to go.*) Stay, Dominique. Buy me some blotters, please.

DOMINIQUE. One dozen, sir?

DUMAS FILS. Two dozen. My blotters disappear, Dominique.

DOMINIQUE (*gravely*). I am sorry to hear that. (*A bell sounds.*) Shall I answer the bell, sir?

DUMAS FILS. If you please. If it's my mother, fetch her in here. (*DOMINIQUE goes out back. Almost instantly he returns, ushering MARIE LABAY, a trim, kindly woman with shrewd eyes.*)

DOMINIQUE (*not too loudly*). Madame Labay. (*He goes out back. MARIE comes to DUMAS FILS, now on his feet, and plants a deft, emphatic little kiss upon each cheek. Meanwhile her shrewd little eyes itemise each particular of his dress and person.*)

MARIE LABAY. Good morning, son.

DUMAS FILS. Good morning, mother. You look very young to-day.

MARIE LABAY. Do I? I have trained my son well. He says pretty things to me.

DUMAS FILS. It's true. If you don't begin to grow old pretty soon, I shall have to show you the way.

MARIE LABAY. I know. You were always willing to instruct your mother. What is the matter with that button on your coat?

DUMAS FILS. Never mind the button. I want to talk to you about something.

MARIE LABAY (*decisively*). I shall talk all the better if I have a needle in my hand. (*He removes the coat a little reluctantly. MARIE LABAY, appropriating the coat and producing a needle and thread, sits in an easy-chair left. Her son sits on the chair-arm as she works.*)

DUMAS FILS. Do you always carry a needle with you?

MARIE LABAY. Yes. Don't you always carry a pencil with you?

DUMAS FILS (*with real tenderness*). I don't want you to work. I should like to make you happy. I should like to give you leisure.

MARIE LABAY. That is saying in the same breath that you would like to make me happy and that you would like to make me miserable.

DUMAS FILS. Do you love work so much? That is like father.

MARIE LABAY (*glancing toward the other desk*). He doesn't seem to be working hard this morning. Is he still in bed?

DUMAS FILS. Yes, he's in bed, but he's already finished a chapter of the *Black Tulip*.

MARIE LABAY. The *Black Tulip*? Is that the name of a bandit?

DUMAS FILS. No, it's the name of a flower they try to grow in Holland.

MARIE LABAY. They must have plenty of time to waste in Holland. You are both writing about flowers, then?

DUMAS FILS. Yes, I am dramatising the *Lady of the Camellias*, my novel. Father wept over my third act, mother. When I asked him what he was doing, he said he was watering the camellias.

MARIE LABAY (*smiling*). That is his way—always laughing when he cries.

DUMAS FILS (*pensively*). That was one of our good days.

MARIE LABAY. After all, there are worse men.

DUMAS FILS. Than my father?

MARIE LABAY. Than either of you. There is your coat. Stand up. (*She helps him to put on the coat. Then she seats herself on the sofa with an air of readiness.*) Now what is your trouble?

DUMAS FILS (*elbow on desk*). Did I say that I was in trouble?

MARIE LABAY. You sent for me.

DUMAS FILS (*fondly*). Do I never send for you but when I am in trouble? (*She shakes her head.*)

MARIE LABAY (*cheerfully*). Luckily for me, that is rather often.

DUMAS FILS (*sitting on sofa and taking her hand*). This time it isn't trouble exactly. It's a difficulty. Mother, I am growing old—fabulously old.

MARIE LABAY. I know how old you are.

DUMAS FILS. I mean I feel old. I see the sexton at the end of the path. And every year is more churlish than the last. (*Breaking off.*) I said a pretty thing about that in one of my last manuscripts. (*He has loosed her hand.*)

MARIE LABAY. I thought we were talking about the difficulty.

DUMAS FILS. Not at all. We are talking about the pretty

things that I say in my manuscripts. When we have finished with the manuscripts, we will take up the difficulty.

MARIE LABAY. Very well. Let us have the pretty thing.

DUMAS FILS. I said that during our first twenty-five years Time treats us affectionately like a parent, during the next twenty-five he treats us respectfully like a husband, and during the last twenty-five contemptuously like a tired lover who wants to jilt us and doesn't know how.

MARIE LABAY. I should never have thought of that. You were cleverer than I was when you were only seven years old.

DUMAS FILS. You will be wiser than I am when I am a hundred.

MARIE LABAY (*demurely*). Are you getting ready to be a hundred now?

DUMAS FILS. Not quite that. I am thinking of getting married, mother.

MARIE LABAY. Ah!

DUMAS FILS (*fetching a photograph from the desk*). There she is.

MARIE LABAY (*scanning the picture*). Very pretty.

DUMAS FILS. I think her pretty. (MARIE LABAY gives him a brief, keen glance.) Her name is Julie Hauterive. She is the daughter of a notary in the Rue du Bac.

MARIE LABAY (*with unembarrassed directness*). Has she money?

DUMAS FILS. Twenty thousand francs. It will be settled on her. The father is resolute about that.

MARIE LABAY. How much are you earning, my son?

DUMAS FILS. Last year I earned ten thousand francs.

MARIE LABAY (*reflectingly*). On her money and yours you could keep a wife and one child. By the time there were more children you would be earning more money.

DUMAS FILS. You would not object for yourself, mother?

MARIE LABAY. Why should I object?

DUMAS FILS. Many women do object to their sons' marriages.

MARIE LABAY (*with touching dignity*). Other women have more to lose. I do not live with my son.

DUMAS FILS. That has not been the son's fault, mother.

MARIE LABAY. My son builds a new hearth. It will have, I suppose, no place for his mother. (DUMAS FILS rises, walks to the window, returns swiftly, and, sitting on the floor, takes his mother's hand in his.)

DUMAS FILS. Dearest, it is a very stupid world.

MARIE LABAY. I learned that long ago, my son. (*Silence.*) It is a pity, though. I look well in a lace cap.

DUMAS FILS. You mean ?

MARIE LABAY. I mean I should have made an excellent grandmother. And your father—will he be shut out, too ?

DUMAS FILS (*releasing the hand as he resumes his seat*). Practically. That is what I wanted to ask you about. I told you just now that I earned ten thousand francs last year. Well, I spent very little of it.

MARIE LABAY. There could be no better omen for a happy marriage.

DUMAS FILS. I did not save one sou. I am in debt.

MARIE LABAY. How could that be ?

DUMAS FILS. I share this lodging with another person.

MARIE LABAY. But your father cannot be dependent upon you. He earns ten times as much as you do.

DUMAS FILS. My father spends more than he earns. (*Pause.*) He spends more than we both earn.

MARIE LABAY. My poor boy !

DUMAS FILS. It is I who see the creditors. The *Black Tulip* sells at a sou a word ; *Diane de Lys* at a centime a word. Plainly it is *Diane* that must be interrupted when explanations have to be made to angry tradespeople. It is I who promise money to the creditors ; it is I who find the money.

MARIE LABAY. That is hard.

DUMAS FILS. If my father earned less than I did, or if I spent the money on his necessities, I should not find it hard. But it is not for necessities that I am paying.

MARIE LABAY. For what, then ?

DUMAS FILS (*with some hesitation*). Two weeks ago a jeweller's clerk brought a bill for 750 francs for a scimitar of pearls. My father was writing and I paid the bill. The same morning Madame Laurent called. You have heard of Madame Laurent ?

MARIE LABAY (*with her shrewd little nod*). Oh, yes.

DUMAS FILS. My father left his writing to drive in the park with Madame Laurent. She was wearing a scimitar of pearls.

MARIE LABAY (*with humour that includes compassion*). At any rate you know where your money goes to.

DUMAS FILS. I love my father very much.

MARIE LABAY (*simply*). He is a great man.

DUMAS FILS (*musingly*). I shall never be so great a man as he. But I hope I shall not be so troublesome to my son.

MARIE LABAY (*with her homely wisdom*). It is easy to be good to unborn children.

DUMAS FILS. If I married, I should have to leave my father——

MARIE LABAY (*briskly*). Is that why you are marrying?

DUMAS FILS. Mother!

MARIE LABAY. Are you sure that you love this girl?

DUMAS FILS. I love her profoundly.

MARIE LABAY (*joining the tips of her fingers in her lap*). In that case there is nothing more to be said. (*But she looks somehow as if there were a good deal more to be thought about.*)

DUMAS FILS. My father is passionately attached to me. He could not bear the thought of separation. That is the difficulty. That is why I have sent for you.

MARIE LABAY. And you wish me to tell him——

DUMAS FILS. That this parting is necessary.

MARIE LABAY (*after a pause*). Very well. But I should have been better pleased to tell him something that would make him happy.

DUMAS FILS. He will not be unhappy long.

MARIE LABAY. Perhaps not.

DUMAS FILS (*self-defensively*). You had to part from me, mother.

MARIE LABAY. I had to give you to him. I had hoped you would be happy together. (DUMAS FILS *lays an affectionate hand upon her shoulder.*)

DUMAS FILS (*rising*). Dominique shall tell him that you are here. Then I shall go to my publisher's. Shall I come back in three-quarters of an hour? (MARIE LABAY *silently assents*. DUMAS FILS *rings*. DOMINIQUE *appears on the threshold right.*) Dominique, is my father up?

DOMINIQUE. Yes, sir.

DUMAS FILS. Will you tell him that Madame Labay is here?

(DOMINIQUE *bows, and goes out right*. DUMAS FILS *with a parting gesture goes out back*. MARIE LABAY *makes a tour of inspection round the room*. The door right opens to admit DUMAS PÈRE, a vigorous, full-bodied, handsome man in the late forties, with a swarthiness of tint in which the Ethiopian strain is clearly mirrored.)

DUMAS (*kissing MARIE upon the forehead, pressing her hand once or twice, and at last leading her gently to a chair down stage right*).

Marie ! (*He sits at his desk in a chair so disposed that it commands at pleasure a view of MARIE and of his son's desk.*) Marie, tell me that you are as well as you look, and I will forgive you for not having come to see me for four months.

MARIE LABAY. I am very well, and I was here two months ago.

DUMAS. Two months or four, you will have breakfast with us, will you not ? Dominique makes first-rate coffee, and I will serve it to you with my own inky hands, something I have not yet done for duchesses.

MARIE LABAY (*laughing gently*). Thank you, I have had my coffee, and I don't want the duchesses to envy me.

DUMAS. They could do nothing half so sensible. Marie, I should have married you.

MARIE LABAY (*between jest and earnest*). I should have been very much obliged.

DUMAS. We should have been very happy. I should have been furious with you sometimes, and sometimes doubtless—dog that I am—I should have been unfaithful ; but I should have come back from my rages the best-tempered fellow in the world and back from my strayings the most constant. I should have read you ten chapters from my novels every night while you were mending the holes in my stockings, and I should have taken care that there were holes enough to last out the ten chapters.

MARIE LABAY. I don't see why that should have been necessary.

DUMAS. Stupid ! Without the stockings you would have fallen asleep. Marie, I am writing a new novel, the *Black Tulip*. (*With relish*). I suppose you think that is the name of a bandit.

MARIE LABAY (*demurely*). No, I should suppose it was the name of a Dutch flower.

DUMAS (*much disappointed*). This world is running down fast. One can find ignorance nowhere, even among the dressmakers. (*Regaining his cheerfulness.*) You will be able to finish this story, Marie ; it is short.

MARIE LABAY. Working-people like novels to be short.

DUMAS (*confidentially*). How far have you got in *Monte Cristo* ?

MARIE LABAY (*promptly, like a good child*). Chapter fifty-five.

DUMAS (*joyously*). I congratulate you. There is a glorious surprise awaiting you in chapter fifty-seven. Do you read that boy's novels ? (*He nods a little sourly toward the further desk*).

MARIE LABAY (*diplomatically*). When I have yours to read ?

DUMAS (*delighted*). True, true, you must keep your rare minutes for the higher literature. You shall see his new play—when the censor has got through with it. The rogue has something—I do not know what—a vein. Honestly, Marie, it is a damnably silly play, but the third act would draw sobs from paving-stones.

MARIE LABAY. He is his father's son.

DUMAS (*shaking his head*). No, no, Marie. Clever perhaps, but no martial imagination. I will tell you a good story about that.

MARIE LABAY (*resolutely*). I will listen to no stories against that boy.

DUMAS. True, true, that is excusable in a mother. (*With renewed positiveness*). But you shall hear the story, and after that I will cut out my tongue as penance for having disobeyed so good a woman. Is it a bargain?

MARIE LABAY. Yes, yes, go on.

DUMAS. The other day I offered him the stub of the pen with which I had written *The Three Musketeers*. I told him to sleep with it under his pillow, and he would dream of rapiers. The next morning he told me he had dreamt of blotting-pads.

MARIE LABAY. Nobody can choose his dreams.

DUMAS (*not heeding her*). The quadroons are the strong hearts, Marie. I am not boasting. I have many other faults, dear friend, but I am not boastful. But the quadroons are the peerless mixture—civilised like the whites and passionate like the blacks. The octoroons are water-cresses.

MARIE LABAY. I like water-cresses.

DUMAS. They are fit for women. I will tell you another story, Marie.

MARIE LABAY. I will hear no more stories that are not kind to my son.

DUMAS. This will interest you. Dominique says that the other night when I had drunk three bottles I called for coffee.

MARIE LABAY. Well?

DUMAS. They brought me a coffee-pot and a cream-jug.

MARIE LABAY (*with interest*). You never would take sugar.

DUMAS. I poured some black coffee into the cup, and said 'Negro.' I poured in a dash of cream, and the coffee became brown; I said 'Mulatto.' I poured in more cream, and the coffee became yellow-brown; I said 'Quadroon.' Then I poured in still

more cream, and the coffee became tawny; I said 'Octoroon.' Then I took a mouthful, made a face, and poured in more black coffee. That is what Dominique tells me. I have no recollection of it myself, but it must be true, for Dominique has no invention.

MARIE LABAY. Dominique would be respectful to my son.

DUMAS. Respectful! Marie, I am the tenderest of fathers, but the octoroons are thin-blooded. My d'Artagnan would have taken up the boy's Armand, and cr-r-rushed him like a mosquito between his thumb and finger. And as for this woman of his—

MARIE LABAY (*curious*). What woman?

DUMAS. The camellia woman, the heroine of this play of his, spits blood and makes sacrifices. He thinks she's consumptive because she's sacrificial. Fiddlestick! She's sacrificial because she's consumptive. If that woman had had the pair of sound lungs and the sound stomach that I would have given her, she would have sent M. Duval to the devil, with a smart rap on each ear to help him forward on his journey.

MARIE LABAY (*seeing no end to these outpourings*). Alexandre, I want to talk to you about our son.

DUMAS. You think I am talking too much. You are unjust, Marie. I have faults by the dozen, dear friend, but I am not talkative. And to prove it I will only tell you one more little anecdote, and I have done. Last autumn an editor wanted the final sheets of a serial that I was writing for his magazine. On the morning when the last instalment was due, I was what a tactful person like yourself would call incapacitated. What do you think that young man did? *He finished the novel*. And what do you think?—you cannot imagine the abasement to which the profession of journalism has sunk in our day—the editor printed it.

MARIE LABAY (*in her shrewd way*). Did you give the cheque you received for the sheets to Alexandre?

DUMAS (*confused*). The cheque? I do not think—I don't remember—(*recovering himself*)—would you have me insult my son with a cheque when my whole fortune, to say nothing of my heart, is at his disposal? No, no, I have many other faults, Marie, but I am not tactless. The boy, I regret to say, has not inherited my tact. I will put off my impatience to hear what you are about to say to me, and will tell you one further anecdote.

MARIE LABAY (*gently ironical*). Couldn't you make it two?

DUMAS. He goes to bed at about the hour when I go out to begin the evening. Night before last I said to him 'Good night,

Saint Louis,' which was surely a pretty way of telling him that he was a puritanical hypocrite, was it not, Marie ?

MARIE LABAY. Yes, yes.

DUMAS. And he said to me 'Good night, Henri Trois.' (*Theatrical pause, then pathetically.*) He might have made it Henri Quatre. (*Imploringly.*) Marie ! He might have made it Henri Quatre !

MARIE LABAY (*half smiling, half compassionate*). Of course he might.

DUMAS. But I will be calm. I have a thousand other faults, as you, dear one, know only too well, but I am not excitable. If I were the least bit given that way, I might permit myself some warmth of language on the subject of that boy's morality.

MARIE LABAY. He isn't so moral really, Alexandre.

DUMAS. Do not say it, Marie. I know to be sure that he does get drunk at scandalously long intervals, and I am told that he now and then lays pitiful sums—a louis or so—sums that would disgrace any self-respecting libertine—upon a horse-race. Was that what I trained him for ? Marie, I could lay my hand upon my heart and swear before all the host of listening seraphim that I am not responsible for that boy's virtue. He did not get his temperance from me.

MARIE LABAY. He had two parents, you know.

DUMAS (*affectionately*). True, true, you best of women—(*he reflects and resumes in a slightly different tone*)—but even you in those days, Marie, were not quite the angel that you have since become.

MARIE LABAY (*smiling*). No, that would have been inconvenient for you.

DUMAS. You are right. I verily believe that there is no man living who has had so many occasions for thankfulness that pretty women are not angels. But, after all perhaps, I should have left him to you. You would have sent him to mass every Sunday and to confession every fortnight, and all that—who knows !—might have bred in him a wholesome inclination for the tavern. Do you still go to mass, Marie ?

MARIE LABAY. Every Sunday.

DUMAS (*with a long breath of relief*). He doesn't go to mass—yet. What hour do you go ?

MARIE LABAY. Six o'clock.

DUMAS. That was a blessed invention, that six o'clock mass,

Marie; it saved the rest of a valuable day for earthly pleasure. It is very fortunate for the Parisians that the good God is an early riser.

MARIE LABAY (*as if rising*). I shall not stay with you if you talk like that.

DUMAS. Sit down, Marie, and we will talk no more about God. I admit that there are livelier topics. I have not yet told you all the ways in which this son of ours is a burden to his father. He pays his debts, Marie, pays them—can you imagine it?—when they are due. And the dog, on top of all that, expects people to believe that he is an artist and a man of letters.

MARIE LABAY. We must be patient with him.

DUMAS. What is more, he asks me to pay my debts. He might as well ask me to have flaxen hair.

MARIE LABAY. Very well. We must be patient with you, too, then.

DUMAS. That young man has a mania for order. (*Rising and crossing to DUMAS FILS's desk.*) Look at that desk. And look at mine.

MARIE LABAY (*demurely*). There is a difference.

DUMAS. I repeat that he has a mania for order. I am not a maniac, Marie.

MARIE LABAY. Not in that point, certainly.

DUMAS (*with gradually waxing excitement*). Look at his pencils. Three—in a row. *In a row*, Marie. Sharpened by formula. (*Holds out pencil.*) He instructs Dominique how to sharpen his pencils. I always let Dominique instruct me. There are his pipes—bowl of each laid across other's stem. Bah! Look at his letter-paper. (*Pulls out drawer violently, and exhibits contents.*) Four kinds—corner for each. Lilac tint for *billets-doux*! (*He gesticulates sweepingly with the drawer; the contents fly out.*)

MARIE LABAY. Never mind. I will pick them up. (*She collects the papers and hands them to DUMAS, who replaces them in the drawer with obvious perturbation.*)

DUMAS (*pausing uneasily*). The trouble is, Marie, I do not remember exactly whether the lilac tint goes in the further right or the further left-hand corner.

MARIE LABAY. One corner is as good as another.

DUMAS. For the sane, yes. But—— (*Shakes his head, strives vainly to remember, and thrusts the drawer despondently back into its place.*) You see, if I disarrange his desk, he will revenge himself.

MARIE LABAY (*puzzled*). How ?

DUMAS (*subdued and downcast*). He will clear up mine.

MARIE LABAY. I shall save him the trouble. I will clear up that desk myself. How do you ever find anything in that mess, anyhow ? (*She begins to arrange the desk. DUMAS fetches a chair to left of desk, and sits on its arm.*)

DUMAS. Find anything ? I will tell you. (*Slight pause.*) I thrust my hand in, shut my eyes—and pray to God. I must get away from that desk, Marie—and from his. Between them they are ruining my intellect. Marie, I must part from my son. I have a chance to go to Brussels.

MARIE LABAY (*startled*). What would you do there ?

DUMAS. The editorship of *L'Ami du Peuple* is vacant. It will be offered me if I let the owners know that I am willing to accept it.

MARIE LABAY. But you would have to leave Paris.

DUMAS. That is an objection to going to Brussels certainly, but it is equally an objection to going anywhere else.

MARIE LABAY. But why should you go anywhere ? (*Between pauses she continues to arrange the desk.*)

DUMAS. I must have some reason for parting from Alexandre.

MARIE LABAY (*pained*). Don't you really care for him ?

DUMAS. I care for him a great deal. I have two irresistible reasons for loving him : he is mine, and he is yours. But, love him as I may, Marie, he cannot be lived with : his desk is too orderly.

MARIE LABAY (*a little impatient for the first time*). You are very foolish about that desk.

DUMAS (*delicately taking her hand and then delicately releasing it*). You are never so wise, my dear, as when you call me foolish. (*Pause. They look at each other.*)

MARIE LABAY (*reluctantly acquiescent*). Perhaps, after all, it is the best way.

DUMAS. Ah, you feel with me. Everything is easy, then. No one will break the news to him so tenderly as you.

MARIE LABAY. Why am I to break the news to him ?

DUMAS. Because it must be done tenderly.

MARIE LABAY (*eyeing him keenly*). What makes you think that it must be done tenderly ?

DUMAS (*solemnly*). The boy worships me, Marie.

MARIE LABAY (*wide-eyed*). He does ?

DUMAS. I have grounds for what I say.

MARIE LABAY. I thought he disapproved of everything you did.

DUMAS. That is quite right. He despises me and worships me. The combination is entirely possible.

MARIE LABAY. I am not sure of that.

DUMAS (*not unreproachfully*). Every woman who has ever worshipped a man would understand the possibility.

MARIE LABAY (*simply*). That is quite beyond me.

DUMAS. You must make it quite clear to him, Marie, that there is no hope of his accompanying me to Brussels—as sub-editor, for example. That will be his first thought.

MARIE LABAY (*preoccupied*). I will remember. But, Alexandre, are you really sure that this parting will break your son's heart?

DUMAS. Quite sure.

MARIE LABAY. And if you were sure that the parting would not break his heart, you would be glad? (*She looks at him rather wistfully. She has brought order, as by miracle, out of the confusion on the desk, to which she now adds, from time to time, a skilfully completing touch.*)

DUMAS. I should be overjoyed.

MARIE LABAY. You shall be overjoyed, then. I haven't yet told you what I wanted to see you for.

DUMAS. I am to learn, then, at last what I have been vainly supplicating you to tell me for the last three-quarters of an hour?

MARIE LABAY. Yes, you are to learn it. The boy will not object to a separation from you, Alexandre.

DUMAS (*rising from the chair-arm*). Will not object?

MARIE LABAY. He is about to take a step which will make a separation necessary.

DUMAS (*hastily*). A step? What step?

MARIE LABAY (*slowly, after a pause*). He wishes to marry.

DUMAS (*staring violently, but instantly controlling himself, and sitting in the chair*). You are joking. (*Catching at another straw.*) He was joking. He wanted to laugh at your fright. These boys have no reverence any more, Marie. They are shameless—perfectly shameless, I assure you. They tell lies as ridiculous as the Count of Monte Cristo.

MARIE LABAY (*firmly, yet with consideration*). He is planning to marry—a notary's daughter—in the Rue du Bac.

DUMAS (*gasping*). Notary! Rue du Bac!

MARIE LABAY (*pleadingly*). He is twenty-six, Alexandre.

DUMAS (*with deep injury*). I am only forty-eight. Am I marrying?

MARIE LABAY (*with her gentle irony*). No, you are looking for an editorship.

DUMAS. Editorship! Why should I put myself out for those despicable Belgians? When a son is mad, his father should stay by him.

MARIE LABAY. But——

DUMAS. We will move to other quarters. The three of us could not live in this apartment.

MARIE LABAY (*gently*). I fear that is hardly possible, Alexandre. The family—have other expectations.

DUMAS. Ah, they object? (MARIE LABAY *nods*.) The notaries object? I am only the grandson of a marquis. They will have the grandson of a duke, no doubt. They are exacting in the Rue du Bac. (*With sudden, swift anger, springing from the chair.*) What does my son say? What does he say, Marie? He prefers *them*—to me?

MARIE LABAY (*tenderly wise*). The young cling to each other.

DUMAS. He has betrayed me, Marie—his affectionate and devoted father—his father who not five minutes ago was flinging away an editorship in Belgium, the most enlightened commonwealth in Europe, for his sake. Was I not, Marie?

MARIE LABAY (*not choosing to contradict him*). Yes, yes.

DUMAS (*walking to the window left, in front of which he wheels round and faces MARIE*). Of what was I talking just now? Of what do I ever talk except that boy? I call you to witness, Marie, that not two minutes ago I was commending his virtues, his temperance, his sobriety, his early hours, and his inimitable punctuality with his creditors. Did I not compare his virtues with my faults? You heard me, Marie, you heard me offer my thanks to that heaven which has vouchsafed me in my infirmity the counsel and example of so eminent a son.

MARIE LABAY. There is no doubt, my friend, that you said a great deal about his virtues.

DUMAS (*with pathos*). I forgot nothing, Marie. I talked to you about his orderliness. Surely you remember. I showed you the beautiful precision of his desk. My fondness omitted no detail. I could not forbear, poor doting father that I was, to point out to you the neatness with which he sharpened his pencils, and the

crossing of the bowls of his tobacco-pipes. You will correct me if I am wrong. Did I or did I not mention the tobacco-pipes?

MARIE LABAY. You mentioned them very distinctly.

DUMAS. And he will now desert his father, his father who finds his daily hope and inspiration in his presence! (*He puts his hand to his forehead.*) He will go to the Rue du Bac—a wretched and loathsome alley—to pick up among its other refuse a notary's daughter. (*He flings out both hands.*) Notaries! If he wanted to insult his helpless father, I put it to you, could he not have married the daughter of a glazier or of a tobacconist? Have the makers of sausages no daughters that he must grub for a wife among notaries—notaries that have swallowed up half his father's royalties with their ungodly fees!

MARIE LABAY. Listen to me.

DUMAS (*pacing the floor in frenzy*). And we were so happy together, he and I. He forgets that, the ingrate, the bastard! (*Meeting MARIE's reproachful eyes.*) Have I wounded you, dearest heart? Very well; then he shall not be a bastard, but he shall be everything else under the blue heaven that is iniquitous and vile. I will write a supplement to the dictionary. I will enlarge the French language, to find new names for his atrocities! I will——

MARIE LABAY (*crossing stage left to DUMAS*). Calm yourself, Alexandre. I want to ask you a plain question.

DUMAS (*stopping*). What question?

MARIE LABAY. If he is all these things you say he is, surely you and he should not live in the same house.

DUMAS (*in a momentary lull*). He is all those things when I am excited, Marie, but I am not excited all the time.

MARIE LABAY. Young men leave their fathers every day to live with their wives. There is nothing unusual about that. You would see there wasn't, if you would only control yourself.

DUMAS. When people want to drive a man to frenzy, they tell him to control himself.

MARIE LABAY. Just now you wanted to go to Brussels.

DUMAS (*taking fire again*). Brussels! Marie, if there is a spot on this globe unfit for the residence of a civilised human being, it is Brussels.

MARIE LABAY. When you are reasonable, you will want to go to Brussels.

DUMAS (*raging again*). I will not be reasonable. Let octoroons

and notaries be reasonable. I have every other fault that would sink a sinful soul to Hades, but I am not reasonable. Let him marry this girl! Let him marry all the women in France, in Patagonia, and in Timbuctoo, if he so pleases! Let him get me grandsons among the Esquimaux and Malays! But they shall never climb upon my knee. (*In a voice of the deepest suffering.*) He sat there, Marie! He sat there! (*Vehemently.*) Tell him I am glad of this match. Tell him that I was flying to Brussels to free myself from his obnoxious company. Tell him that I exult in this marriage because it saves me at a stroke from those two visitations of Providence upon my errors, Brussels and himself! (*He brings his fist down violently upon DUMAS FILS's desk; all its contents vibrate.*)

MARIE LABAY (*who has walked to door back, and returns at this moment*). He's coming, I think.

DUMAS. Let him come. I will go into that room, Marie (*pointing right*), and I will write another chapter of the *Black Tulip* in which I will put half a dozen notaries to death.

MARIE LABAY. Why don't you write at your desk?

DUMAS. Never. The sight of him at his desk would freeze my ink. (*He disappears right. A brief pause. At the door back MARIE LABAY meets DUMAS FILS, who enters alertly, but without bustle.*)

MARIE LABAY. Come in, my son.

DUMAS FILS (*anxiously*). Is it all right?

MARIE LABAY (*gravely*). I think it is all right. Come in and sit down. (*MARIE sits on sofa, DUMAS FILS in the chair before his desk.*) Your father and you want much the same things. You are more alike than you think.

DUMAS FILS (*smiling*). You are wrong for once, mother. I have numberless other faults, as I have often said, but I do not resemble my father.

MARIE LABAY. I will not argue that. I am to tell you that he consents to your marriage.

DUMAS FILS. Willingly?

MARIE LABAY (*hesitating*). I think I may say willingly. He was very forcible in his consent.

DUMAS FILS (*warmly*). He is very generous.

MARIE LABAY (*watching him, and calculating her moves*). The truth is that this marriage comes at a time that is very fortunate for him.

DUMAS FILS. Fortunate!

MARIE LABAY. There is a Belgian paper, *L'Ami du Peuple*, that needs an editor.

DUMAS FILS (*with animation*). They have offered it to him ?

MARIE LABAY. They have offered to offer it ; people do that sometimes, he says.

DUMAS FILS. Yes : they do that when they refuse to be refused.

MARIE LABAY. If he goes, he will have to leave you. That is the news that he wanted me to break to you.

DUMAS FILS (*who has made a movement of disquiet*). Let me be clear about this, mother. This wish to go to Brussels—to leave me, this came after you told him about my marriage, did it not ?

MARIE LABAY (*watching him keenly*). No, before.

DUMAS FILS (*stunned*). Before !

MARIE LABAY. You see it all fits perfectly. Each of you has found out that he is unhappy with the other.

DUMAS FILS (*wounded*). He had no reason to be unhappy with me.

MARIE LABAY (*sagely*). It is always easy to find reasons for unhappiness. At all events you are free to marry now.

DUMAS FILS (*hastily*). Yes, yes, I can marry of course. There is no hurry about that.

MARIE LABAY. I thought you loved her profoundly.

DUMAS FILS. My dear mother, be reasonable. Of course I love her profoundly—since I am to marry her. But I have only seen her twice. In the company of her parents she is naturally not talkative.

MARIE LABAY. In that matter she will doubtless improve.

DUMAS FILS (*too distressed to notice this*). You think my father doesn't really love me ?

MARIE LABAY (*playing her cards deftly*). No doubt he loves you. He spoke of you with high esteem.

DUMAS FILS. He was so good to me when I was a very little boy. It is hard—to imagine—a change. (*He speaks with difficulty.*)

MARIE LABAY (*with a faint smile*). Haven't you changed ?

DUMAS FILS. Not in one thing. Never in one thing, mother. A son always wants—to be wanted.

MARIE LABAY. Perhaps a father wants that, too.

DUMAS FILS (*still in evident distress*). At any rate if he goes to Brussels, I need not marry this foolish girl. She cares nothing for me, you know.

MARIE LABAY. When I told him you wanted to marry this girl, he said he should not have to go to Brussels.

DUMAS FILS (*with still more pain*). Then he doesn't even *want* the editorship? All he wants is to be rid of me.

MARIE LABAY. I told you fathers and sons were very much alike.

DUMAS FILS. You don't know what he has meant to me. I have always said that I had rather be his son and part negro than to have the whitest blood of Europe in my veins. I had rather be his son and bastard than to be heir to the proudest barony in France.

MARIE LABAY. But since you cannot live with him—

DUMAS FILS (*with sudden self-mastery*). You are right. If I can be happy without him, I am a churl to wish that he should be unhappy without me. I shall find other quarters. I may never cross his doorstep again—

MARIE LABAY (*pleadingly*). Why not?

DUMAS FILS (*unheedingly*). But I should be found every night under his window.

MARIE LABAY (*quietly*). You would miss him there.

DUMAS FILS. Why?

MARIE LABAY (*with finality*). He would be found under yours. (*She rises.*) I shall call your father now, and you must speak to him.

DUMAS FILS (*reluctantly*). At once?

MARIE LABAY. That is the only time. When I have called him, I shall go. Good-bye. (*She puts her lips to his forehead, then goes to the door right, and calls.*) Come, Alexandre. Your son is waiting. (*She goes out back, very nearly, but not quite, closing the door.* DUMAS FILS, *motionless in mid-stage, fixes his eyes rather in thoughtfulness than in self-abasement upon the floor.* DUMAS PÈRE, *issuing from the door right, comes forward very slowly and quietly till he stands by his son's side.*)

DUMAS (*in a voice full of hidden vibrations*). I am told, sir, that you wish to leave me.

DUMAS FILS (*meeting his father's eyes*). I hear, sir, that you wish to leave me.

DUMAS. You say 'sir' to me—*already?*

DUMAS FILS. Did I say 'sir'—*father?*

DUMAS. You say 'sir' to me—and *do not know it?*

DUMAS FILS (*looking into his face*). Do you mind so much?

DUMAS. Somebody must love us. If not a son, who else?

DUMAS FILS. You suffer—you, too?

DUMAS (*his hand on the other's shoulder*). Too! But—but then——

DUMAS FILS (*hesitantly*). Father—if neither of us can bear the thought that—that the other doesn't love him, what need is there——

DUMAS (*pressing more strongly*). Yes?

DUMAS FILS (*almost timidly*). For either of us to think it?

DUMAS. My son! My son! (*His eyes fill. At the same instant the two men are in each other's arms. The rear door opens, and the face of MARIE LABAY, smiling upon the pair, is seen for an instant. The door closes soundlessly as the CURTAIN falls.*)

LITERARY ACROSTICS.

A LITERARY Acrostic is published every month, and the Editor of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers two prizes to the most successful solvers. The winners will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. If several solvers send solutions of equal merit, the two whose answers are opened first will win the prizes.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 78.

'Cupid himself would blush
To see me thus transformed to a boy.'

'There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me. I stay here on my bond.'

1. 'I can suck melancholy out of a song as
a weasel sucks eggs.'
2. 'She shall be, to the happiness of England,
An aged princess; many days shall see her,
And yet no day without a deed to crown it.'
3. '—— and want shall shun you;
Ceres' blessing so is on you.'
4. 'Use me but as your ——, spurn me, strike me,
Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,
Unworthy as I am, to follow you.'
5. 'I follow him to serve my turn upon him;
We cannot all be masters.'
6. 'That in the captain's but a —— word,
Which in the soldier is flat blasphemy.'
7. '—— ! the heavy day,
That I have worn so many winters out,
And know not now what name to call myself.'

These nine quotations are taken from eight of Shakespeare's plays.

RULES.

1. Only one answer may be sent to each light.
2. Every correct light and upright will score one point.
3. With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed on page viii of 'Book Notes' in the preliminary pages of this issue: and he must be careful to give also his real name and address.
4. Solvers should not write either the quotations or the references on the same paper as their answers. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to send them at all.
5. Solvers who write a second letter, to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.
6. Answers to Acrostic No. 78 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50 Albemarle Street, London, W.1, and must arrive not later than February 20. No answers will be opened before this date.

PROEM: Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, cvi.

LIGHTS:

ANSWER TO No. 77.

1. R	igh	T
2. I	nc	H
3. N	obl	E
4. G	ree	N
5. I	sl	E
6. N	arro	W

1. Cowper, *Verses supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk*.
2. Scott, *The Lady of the Lake*, vi, 24.
3. Longfellow, *Santa Filomena*.
4. Coleridge, *The Ancient Mariner*, part 1.
5. Shakespeare, *King Richard the Second*, ii, 1.
6. Macaulay, *Lays of Ancient Rome*. *Horatius*, xxxvi.

Acrostic No. 76 ('Celia Arden'): The first two answers that were opened and found to be correct were sent by Mrs. Boucher, Wickham House, Clevedon, and the Countess Dowager of Bradford, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham. These two solvers will choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue.

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